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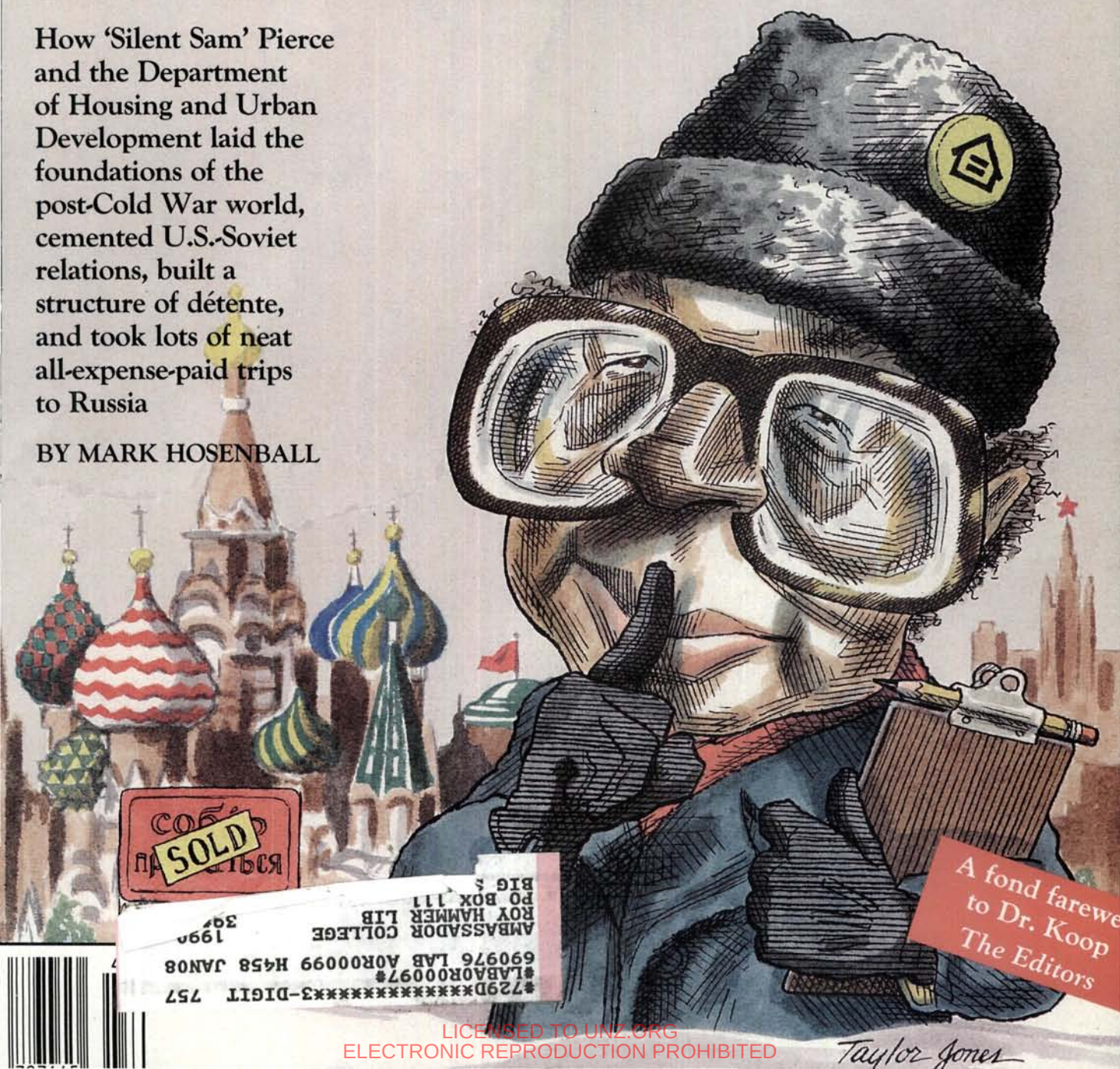
Moscow on the HUD

How 'Silent Sam' Pierce and the Department of Housing and Urban Development laid the foundations of the post-Cold War world, cemented U.S.-Soviet relations, built a structure of détente, and took lots of neat all-expense-paid trips to Russia

BY MARK HOSENBALL



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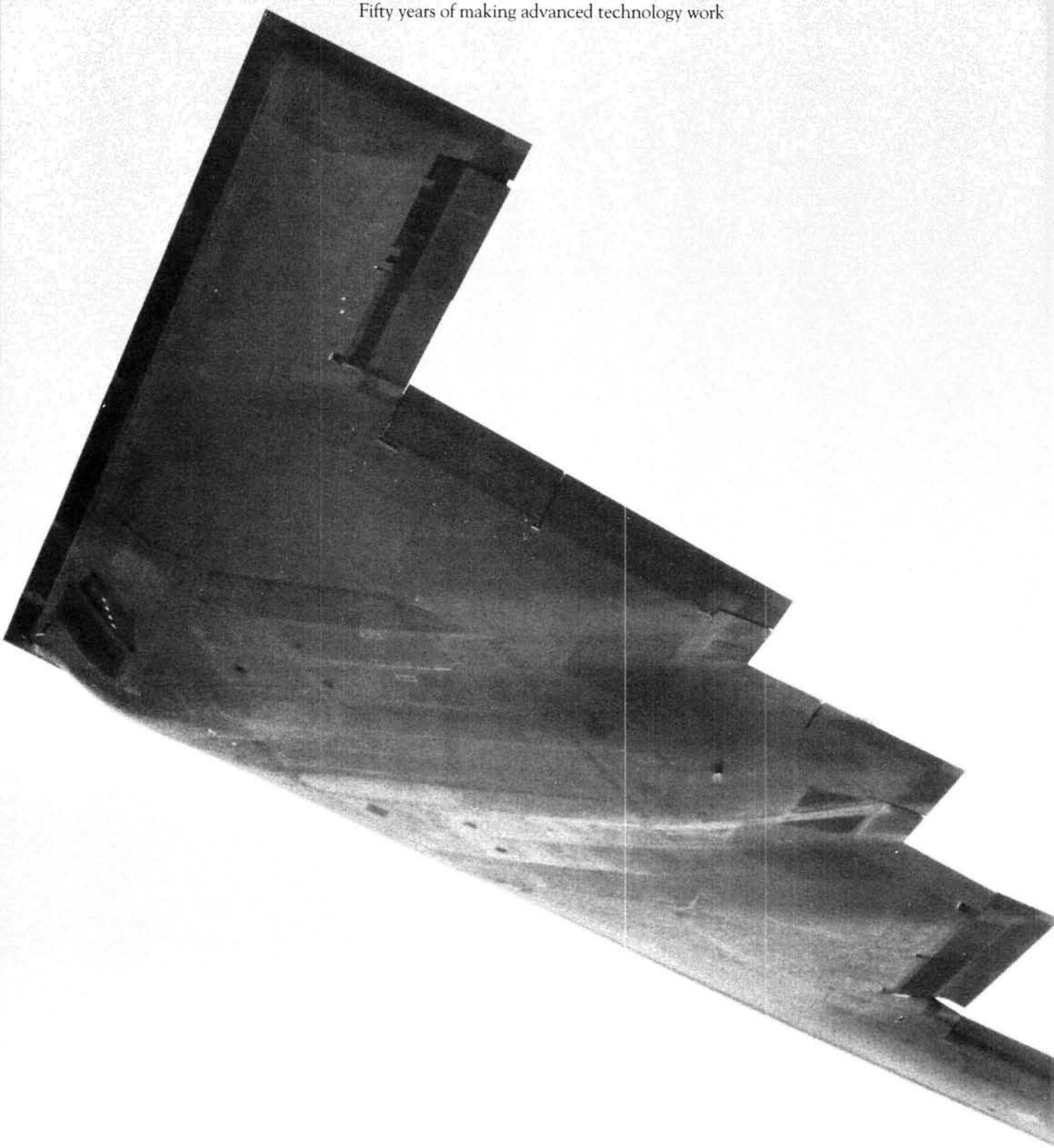

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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FROM WASHINGTON

Talking Chop

From all the talk of "class warfare" around Washington and in the press, you would think that the Democrats had erected a guillotine on the mall and were chopping off the heads of plutocrats as they stepped out of the Willard Hotel. The consensus is that the Democratic congressional leadership made a big mistake in opposing President Bush's capital gains tax cut, and especially by framing the issue in terms of the rich ("George Bush's wealthy friends," as House majority leader Richard Gephardt put it) versus the middle class. That kind of invidious rhetoric doesn't play in this country, it's said, or at least it hasn't since the Depression. People are more concerned about enlarging the pie than about how it is sliced. And so on. That's why a quarter of House Democrats deserted the leadership and supported Bush. Supposedly.

In fact, there is no special reason to think that a bit of invidious comparison can't sell in America, especially when the issue isn't taking from the rich but *giving to* the rich: charging a lower tax rate on a kind of income that goes primarily to the affluent than on ordinary wages. "The Democratic leadership believes in redistributing the wealth," charges House Republican leader Robert Michel. No, it is Mr. Michel's side that favors redistributing the wealth—redistributing it upward. To describe pointing this out as "class warfare" is itself absurd rhetorical overkill, started by the Republicans, for which the press has fallen.

Is the great middle class really ready to do "a far, far better thing" and sacrifice itself on behalf of the wealthy—ostensibly for the greater good of the country? Not likely. In the 1988 presidential campaign, "Capital gains was the one issue on which Dukakis got some traction," says Democratic pollster Geoffrey Garin. A Hotline/KRC poll conducted almost simultaneously with last month's House vote showed, unsurprisingly, that when offered the choice between a capital gains break and the Democratic leadership's alternative of expanded deductibility for Individual Retirement Accounts, voters chose IRAs by 60 percent to 27 percent. Even self-described Republicans preferred the Democratic solution 55 percent to 34 percent.

Most of the Democrats who gave Bush his majority in the House were motivated less by a noble vision of enriching the country by further enriching the rich than by narrower concerns. Most notably, the bill would restore the unjustified special tax break for the timber industry. Capital gains is a classic special-interest lobbying issue, in which the beneficiaries are few but well organized while the losers are many but diffuse and largely ignorant.

It may be that people in general mistakenly see a capital gains tax cut as a recipe for economic growth. Or it may be that the folks who contact congressmen on this issue are not exactly a cross section of America. "The people I've been hearing from on this," said Representative Ben Jones, Democrat of Georgia, "are not the country club people. They're the barbershop people . . . small farmers, timber interests, and people with a little bit of real estate." Politicians' traditional solicitude for "small" farmers and businessmen is especially touching in this case, since a capital gains tax break is only of use to them when they sell out—that is, when they stop being small farmers and businessmen.

Is it really true that class-based politics won't sell in America? The Republicans are eager to peddle that line. But you don't have to go back half a century to find a counterexample. How about the 1988 campaign that elected George Bush? It was a brilliant exercise in stirring up class-based resentment against Eastern elitists, Harvard graduates, and so on—especially impressive since the putative candidate of the masses was a second-generation graduate of Andover and Yale. Yes, there's a difference between economic class and social class, but no one's going to convince me that Leona Helmsley is an inherently more sympathetic figure than Michael Dukakis. Bush and company like to turn this sneery, divisive, populist stuff on and off at their own convenience. But there's no reason for the other side to oblige.

The Republican hypocrisy about "class war" has another aspect, too. Political writer Thomas Byrne Edsall has analyzed the Republican domination of presidential politics as the replacement of the old Democratic "bottom up" majority by a new "top down" majority. The Republicans have consciously worked at

continued on page 41

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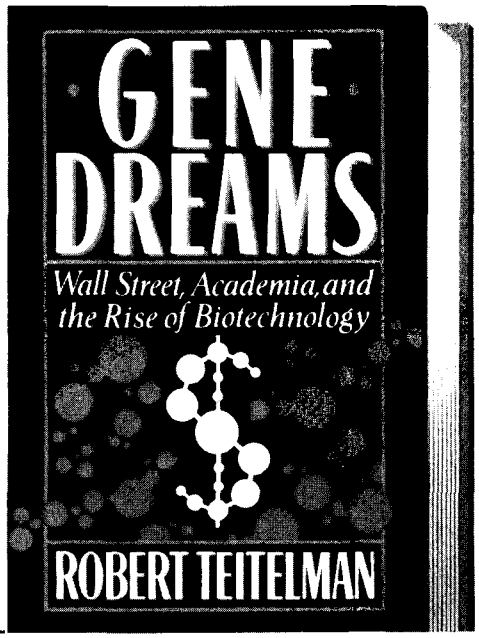

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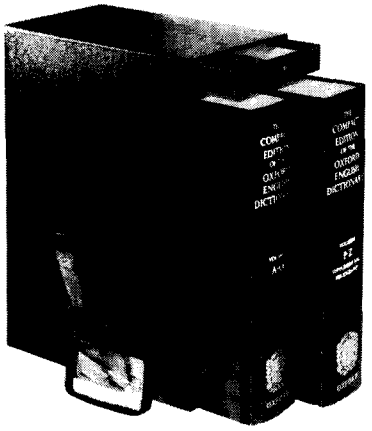

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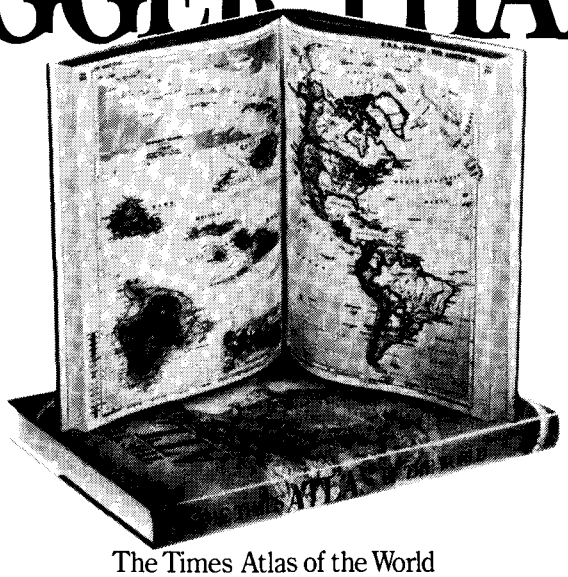

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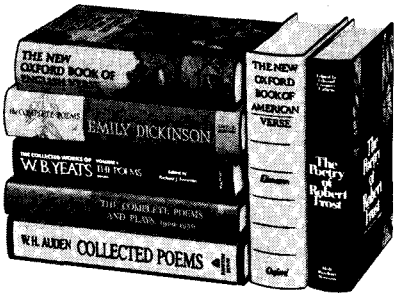

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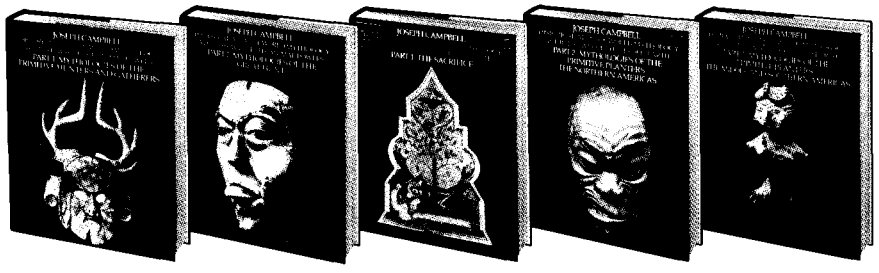

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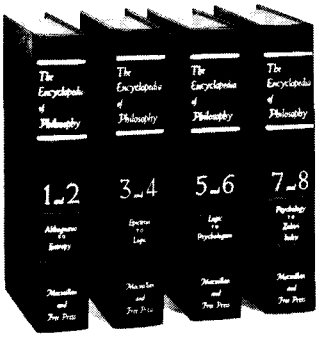

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CORRESPONDENCE

Misplaced Tolerance

To the editors:

Drug Policy Director William Bennett understands what the smug authors of "Crackmire" (September 11) evidently do not—the importance of the expressive power of the law. The origins of the drug menace that savages our cities show that rich and poor users *are* equally part of the problem. The drug habits of "Ivy League college students" imposed an agenda of misplaced tolerance for drug abuse, first on places like Ann Arbor and Berkeley, and later on society at large. Not only did enforcement of drug laws lose its legitimacy, so did the collective voice of those who challenged the Woodstock mythology that drug use was merely a benign form of self-expression. A lot of Ivy Leaguers got in and out of the drug culture with few side effects beyond a year or two of underachievement and a handful of dusty record albums. Most of us have since gone straight, after aerobics and the demands of our careers have taught us that our minds and bodies suffer if we abuse them. Now we wake up to discover that Dave the Dealer has become Carlos the Cartel.

Clear, predictable penalties such as heavy fines or weekend sentences—for drug *use* as well as drug dealing—are indispensable to arresting demand. Punishing privileged drug users is necessary as an expression of our national will to kick our drug habit. Not only that, simple justice demands that such penalties fall upon the privileged and the underprivileged with equal vigor. One would have hoped that a journal of THE NEW REPUBLIC's principles would admit as much.

RICHARD L. RANGER JR.
Bakersfield, California

To the editors:

At what point does the college user become an issue? Certainly Ivy Leaguers are above suspicion of contributing to the drug problem, but I'd like to know TNR's position on, say, pot smokers at the University of Minnesota. Or mushroom eaters at Reed College. Are heroin users at NYU to be considered dangerous? I knew a white kid from the suburbs of New Orleans who was going to pharmacy school so he could enter the illegal drug trade; at what point does this become more damaging than "watching too much TV"?

TOM NAWROCKI
Chicago Illinois

The Bill for Rights

To the editors:

Robert Brustein quotes with approval Richard Posner, who wrote, "Nowadays there is no objective method of determining what is art and what is offensive." Yet in the very same article, Brustein congratulates himself and other NEA panelists for their "capacity to evaluate, almost invariably correctly, the intrinsic worth of [an] applicant theater, rather than its extrinsic reputation among audiences and critics" ("The First Amendment and the NEA," September 11). His comment may be taken as evidence that it is indeed possible to determine whether or not something is art. It appears Brustein wants to have it both ways: "professionals" can decide what is artistically worthy, but the hoi polloi should have no say in determining whether a particular piece of art is deserving of support in the form of its tax dollars.

STEVEN SCHWARTZ
Brookline, Massachusetts

To the editors:

"Chutzpah" is the only word to describe Robert Brustein's tortured apologia for First Amendment protection for government funding of the arts. He *still* doesn't get the point: freedom of artistic expression is *not* compromised by withholding government funding. If the "distinction between censorship and determining the distribution of taxpayers' dollars on moral grounds" eludes Brustein, then he is impervious to rational discourse.

WILLIAM E. OYLER
Minnetonka, Minnesota

To the editors:

Scientists are used to the idea that if our research does not proceed in a direction or manner that the government is interested in, it will not be supported. Unlike artists, we have little recourse to sales of our work or to privately endowed sources of research support. Why does Robert Brustein think that "every artist has a First Amendment right to subsidy"? Is it because the art world has foisted off as art all sorts of trash? St. Louis is blighted by large pieces of ugly rusting steel for which the GSA paid handsomely, on the pretense that it is sculpture. Is the art community upset to learn that it cannot fool everyone forever?

JONATHAN KATZ
St. Louis, Missouri

continued on page 40

A liberal conspiracy emerges from under a cloud

The end of World War II saw the birth of an intellectually liberal "guerrilla" group—including Sidney Hook, Irving Kristol, Arthur Koestler, Dwight Macdonald, and Daniel Bell, and over 100 others—dedicated to battling the spread of Stalinism. The Congress for Cultural Freedom later was to disintegrate amid accusations and revelations of CIA funding.

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THE LIBERAL CONSPIRACY

THE CONGRESS FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM AND THE STRUGGLE FOR THE MIND OF POSTWAR EUROPE

By PETER COLEMAN

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
OCTOBER 23, 1989

KOOP DE GRACE

When Ronald Reagan presented a hardly known, bearded religious zealot as his choice for surgeon general early in his first term, liberals cried out in unison against the nomination. The reflex to reject such a character was not altogether faulty. The White House had picked C. Everett Koop as a sop to the New Right. His limited record supported charges made by this magazine, among others, that he was a doctrinaire opponent of abortion, a Neanderthal on the subject of women's and gays' rights, and lacking the requisite experience in public health. As Koop gives his final interviews and says his farewells this week, let us be the last to admit we were wrong about the good doctor.

What we (and the Reaganites) did not count on in 1981 was Koop's professional honor. Once confirmed in office, he issued pronouncements not as a moralist, but as the uniformed chief officer of the Public Health Service's medical militia. He might abhor abortion personally, but was unwilling to concede that it was a public health menace. He might consider homosexual practice an abomination against God, but, faced with AIDS, he interpreted his duty as inhibiting the epidemic's spread by advocating sex education and promoting the use of condoms. Liberals have congratulated themselves for the surgeon general's "conversion" on these issues, but Koop did not really become pro-choice, or pro-gay. And he did ignore AIDS for several years before he issued his ice-breaking report in 1986.

Still, as an adviser to the public on matters of health, Koop could hardly have been more exemplary. He first came into conflict with members of the far right not over AIDS or abortion, but as a result of his anti-smoking crusade (see "An Officer and a Gentleman" by John B. Judis, TNR, January 23). It is on this issue that he may be seen someday to have had his greatest effect on the well-being of the body politic: it was during Koop's tenure that smoking finally became an anti-social activity in the United States. Just as important, Koop has preached that improved diet and regular exercise will mean more to our health than any number of breakthroughs in medical technology. Sound advice like this is the cheapest and best form of preventive medicine, a practice at which Koop excels. And it is the proper role of the surgeon general. Scolding and exhorting the public about how it takes care of itself is exactly what the occupant of this slightly anachronistic and statutorily weak post should be doing. Had President Bush had the courage to make Koop secretary of health and human services—the job he said he wanted—he could have continued his valuable propaganda campaign from a bullier pulpit, and backed up his sermons with specific legislative proposals.

During his final summer in office, Koop has applied this commonsense, well-body approach to the illness afflicting our country's entire system of health care. The problems he has been highlighting in newspaper interviews and television appearances are no less drastic for their familiarity. America's spending on health care, some 11 percent of GNP, is the highest in the developed world and continues to increase at twice the rate of inflation. Insurance costs to business are rising at a ruinous rate of more than 20 percent per year, which makes American industries less competitive and keeps wages lower than they would be otherwise. The issue of health benefits was the instigating factor behind the two worst strikes of the present hour, the Virginia coal miners' and the AT&T telephone operators' in New England.

"We have to acknowledge that there is something terribly wrong with a system of health care that spends more and more money but seems to serve fewer and fewer people," Koop recently wrote in *Newsweek*. This part of the picture is the most disturbing. One in six Americans lacks insurance. The uncovered are dispro-

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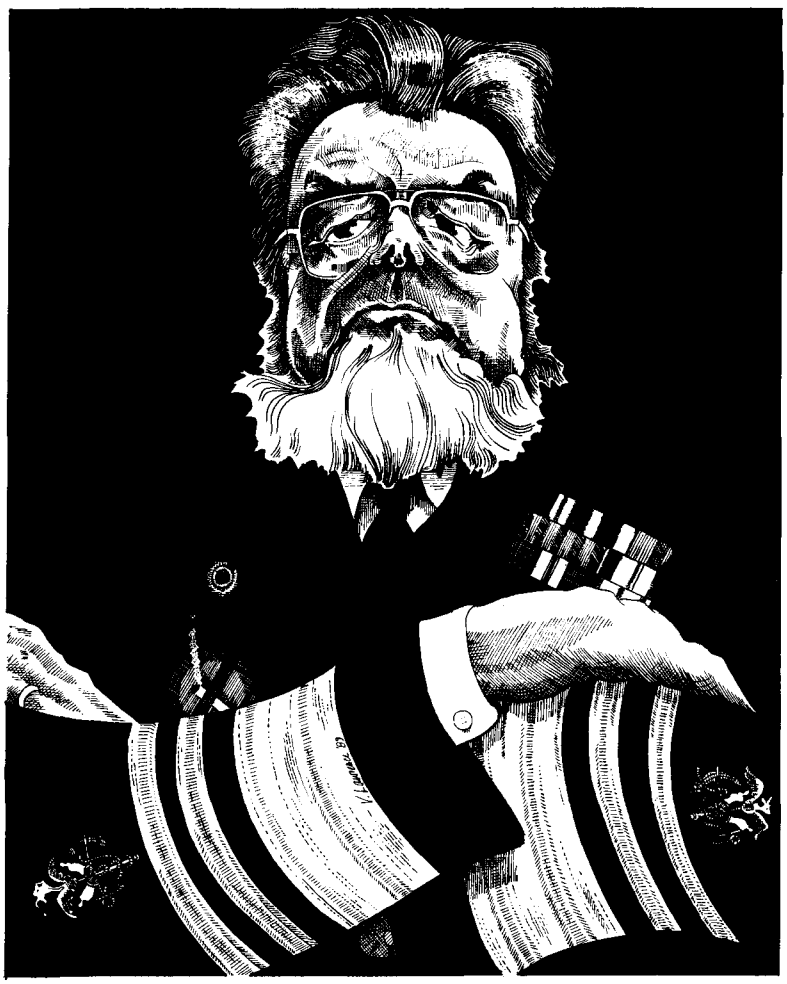
portionately infants and children, who miss out on prenatal care and immunization, the most rudimentary preventive programs. For the minority of poor people who still qualify for the Medicaid program after the Reagan cuts, Medicaid constitutes an incentive to remain unemployed so as to preserve benefits that don't usually come with a low-paying job. Thousands of old people who should be in nursing homes aren't covered and can't afford them. The overall approach is ever more socially Darwinist.

In a recent interview on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered," Koop called for recognition of the right of health care for all Americans, and endorsed resource rationing along the lines of Oregon's recent decision to fund infant health instead of organ transplants. Like many of America's corporate leaders, Koop supports some form of national health provision without ever saying the dread words "socialized medicine." In fact, the kind of system Koop and others are talking about is not precisely "socialized," since doctors would not become government employees. But support for some such idea is no longer limited to socialists or Ted Kennedy liberals; even dragon-slayers of the welfare state like Irving Kristol, who recently endorsed the notion in the *Wall Street Journal*, are coming around. The example of Canada, which 20 years ago budgeted the same amount of money we did for health care and now buys universal care for two-thirds as much per capita, is an inspiring one. It demonstrates to conservatives who assume otherwise that widespread coverage and cost-containment are not mutually exclusive goals.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

If a consensus is developing in favor of a Canadian- or European-style national health system, how should we proceed? Koop proposes that the president name a federal panel, modeled on the Social Security bailout commission of 1983, to study problems and set priorities in the health arena. Such a convocation probably wouldn't do any harm, but it's hard to get excited about the idea. Unless its mandate were actually to invent a national health service, it would duplicate work being done elsewhere. The recently appointed Social Security Advisory Council, chaired by Deborah Steelman, is already examining how to avoid Medicare's impending bankruptcy, and trying to devise a more cohesive and efficient structure for the nation's health system as a whole, as are dozens of private foundations and study groups. Reports and recommendations appear constantly. Many of these proposals are detailed and solid: a group called Physicians for a National Health Plan recently published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* a scheme for a Canadian-style, government-funded national health system. Nor is there shortage of suggestions for how to accomplish every health care goal from paying for nursing homes to limiting malpractice liability.

Some of these ideas have been translated into legislation. But the only major initiative currently being considered by Congress is the Basic Health Benefits for All Americans Act, a bill sponsored by Kennedy and Representative Henry Waxman, Democrat of California, which would require companies to provide health insurance for their employees. The plan, which has already cleared the Senate Labor Committee, is seriously inadequate. Not only does it ignore the unemployed and those with temporary or seasonal work, it offers no incentive to control costs. Businesses simply would have to pay rising insurance rates, and would in turn pass their costs along to consumers as higher prices and to employees in the form of lower wages. Kennedy's plan is not so different from the one that is being tried in his home state, Massachusetts, where an attempt by the government to provide insurance to all without paying appears to be floundering.

Other experiments are more promising. Washington state is trying a plan to fund coverage for the uninsured with a straight surtax. And Californians will vote next month on a plan to do the same with a 35-cent-a-

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pack tax on cigarettes. That's the right idea. If Congress does no more than extend Medicaid benefits in the near term (an idea Bush vaguely favored during the campaign), it should raise the funds with excise taxes on products that contribute to unhealth: cigarettes, gasoline, and tobacco. The Democrats could fight Bush on this issue and win: opposing such disincentives would expose the preposterousness of his anti-tax demagoguery.

As we have said before, what's really needed is a comprehensive plan to cover not just uninsured members of the work force, but everyone (see, for example, "Bill of Health," TNR, July 3). The Canadian model is not a bad place to start. Those who have examined that system see its channeling of all government spending through provincial health authorities as a great advantage. As powerful buyers, these regional bodies can negotiate aggressively with doctors and hospitals who want their business. A state-based version of this scheme, financed by excise taxes and a new payroll tax, makes sense for the United States, and is gaining support. However, to pass such a scheme, Congress not only would have to venture a tax increase but would have to face down three of the most powerful lobbies in Washington: hospitals, insurers, and doctors, all of whom stand to lose under a unified national plan.

In a week when legislators are bending over backward to repeal a catastrophic care program for the elderly they passed last year, standing up to any powerful interest group seems a distant prospect. But a ringing endorsement from our favorite bearded zealot would be an excellent way to kick off the campaign.

PRETORIASTROIKA?

"Peace fever," writes William Claiborne of the *Washington Post*, "is breaking out all over South Africa." Maybe, but it's a bit early to pop the champagne corks. The initial euphoria over the presidency of Frederik W. de Klerk has lingered, despite the apparent cynicism of de Klerk's message. The new president is trying to get something (the cooperation of black leaders in negotiating a new constitution) for nothing (lofty rhetoric and a few stage-managed gestures of "reconciliation"—such as stationing white policewomen to hand flowers to anti-apartheid demonstrators).

To his credit, de Klerk has eliminated a few flagrantly offensive details of apartheid—notably the propagandistic Ministry of Information and police use of the *sjambok*, a heavy leather whip often employed to break up protests. But the underlying machinery of repression remains in place. The most telling example to date: de Klerk's refusal to rescind any part of the state of emergency in order to allow protests in Cape Town and Johannesburg. The marches took place, but only after the government granted special exceptions. Less than two weeks later, Pretoria police halted a multiracial women's march while allowing white supremacists to congregate, explaining that the women had failed to obtain official permission.

De Klerk faces spirited adversaries (both liberal and conservative) within his own government. Black leaders, meanwhile, are justifiably wary of his negotiations gambit. They haven't forgotten the brutal crackdown on the recent "defiance campaign," during which blacks launched peaceful protests against their exclusion from the September elections. The government's action—presumably authorized by de Klerk, then acting president—left 29 dead on election day. And police continued to arrest leaders of the campaign even as the South African press hailed the onset of "Pretoriastroika." De Klerk may genuinely intend to promote reforms. For now, though, his efforts look more like a slick p.r. job.

NOTEBOOK

TAILS YOU LOSE: Coins are about to get a patriotic slap on their backsides. A bill making its way through Congress mandates new reverse sides with designs celebrating the bicentennial of the Constitution. Two years later the new flip sides would be replaced with imprints "emblematic" of the Bill of Rights. The "obverses," as numismatists call them, would remain as they are. The scheme is touted as a quick budgetary fix of $366 million, a savings that results mainly from people keeping coins as souvenirs. Even if that figure were accurate, it wouldn't justify making what are perhaps the only objects all of us use every day less appealing and various. But if Congress wants to meddle, how about getting rid of the penny, which inflation has turned into an expensive and inconvenient anachronism, and ordering up a new dollar coin, which would be truly useful? This project was botched last time with a piece that looked and felt much like a quarter, and by keeping dollar bills in circulation. Next time it's tried, the coin should be small and thick, like Britain's one-pound piece. Nomination for the face: Martin Luther King Jr.

REVOLVING DOOR WATCH, I: The golden turnstile for 1989 goes to Washington lawyer Michael Abbell, who advises the reputed bosses of Colombia's Cali drug cartel on how to avoid extradition to the United States. This is a tough activity to justify in the best of circumstances; the kicker is that until 1984 Abbell headed the Justice Department's office charged with extraditing drug traffickers. His representation of the Cali cutthroats (in part by trying to influence the Senate Foreign Relations Committee without disclosing his interest) must represent a new ethical low: switching sides

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in the middle of the game and taking the playbook with you. According to a story by Michael Isikoff in the *Washington Post* last week, Abbell defends himself by arguing, "I've never been asked to do anything in any way, shape, or form that would be professionally improper."

OUR OWN PETARD:

'Great books,' broadly defined.

THE STANFORD LIBRARY

By Alan Berlow

—THE NEW REPUBLIC, October 2, page 16

'Great books,' broadly defined.

THE STANFORD LIBRARY

By Michael Stanford

—same magazine, same date, page 18

(thanks to S. H. Smith of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and scores of others)

Our abject apologies to everybody, and especially to Alan Berlow, whose piece (as the table of contents reported with unaccountable accuracy) should have been titled "Who's the Puppet?" And that's not all, howlerwise. Readers of last week's profile of the secretary of the interior had a choice between Manuel Luhan (on the cover, and wrong) and Manuel Lujan (inside the magazine, and right). We'll admit we were out to give Lujan a hard time, but we had no intention of attacking him ad homonym.

REVOLVING DOOR WATCH, II: With this issue, Hendrik Hertzberg, who succeeded Michael Kinsley as editor of THE NEW REPUBLIC in 1981, succeeds Michael Kinsley, who succeeded Hendrik Hertzberg as editor of THE NEW REPUBLIC in 1985, as editor of THE NEW REPUBLIC. Do-si-do. Hertzberg is a former staff writer for the *New Yorker* and a former chief White House speechwriter (under President Carter). For most of the past four years he has been sheltered by a couple of Harvard think tanks, the Institute of Politics and the Joan Shorenstein Barone Center on the Press, Politics, and Public Policy. He came back to TNR last year to cover the 1988 presidential campaign, and for the first half of this year he filled in for Kinsley as author of the weekly "TRB from Washington" column. Kinsley, meanwhile, descends to the dignity of senior editor; and he remains the once and future TRB. Good news for readers, bad news for hypocrites, malefactors, and civil aviation lobbyists. If you've got cable, by the way, you can catch Kinsley every weekday evening at 7:30 p.m. on CNN's "Crossfire" debating Patrick ("on the right") Buchanan. (This must make "Crossfire" the only nationwide show that pits a neoliberal against a Falangist on a nightly basis.) And a final personnel flash: Jacob Weisberg, a 1985-86 TNR intern who has since kept busy at Oxford and in the Washington and London bureaus of *Newsweek*, has rejoined THE NEW REPUBLIC as associate editor.

John Dingell, hard-boiled House detective.

BAD COP

By Fred Barnes

John Dingell, the bad cop of the House Democratic leadership, is thriving. He's usually described as the meanest and most feared man in Congress. In fact, Jack Brooks, the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, is meaner, but so what? With Republicans in the White House in the 1980s and the Democrats in disarray, Dingell has made himself the most influential member of the House, and maybe all of Congress.

He has reason to gloat. Earlier this year Speaker Jim Wright was driven from office and whip Tony Coelho resigned. Dan Rostenkowski, the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, couldn't attract a soul—not a liberal Democrat, not a moderate Democrat, not a Republican—to his scheme for indexing the tax rate on capital gains. Richard Gephardt, the majority leader, came up with an alternative to the cut in capital gains favored by President Bush, calling for expanded deductibility for Individual Retirement Accounts and a tax increase. It was overwhelmingly rejected on the House floor. New Speaker Tom Foley was helpless in trying to save the Gephardt alternative. Dingell, meanwhile, who has served in Congress for 34 years, has never wielded more power.

He operates two ways: as legislator and investigator. He is head of the Energy and Commerce Committee, which has jurisdiction over roughly half the legislation coming out of Congress and has become the most potent committee in the House. It has the biggest staff and biggest budget. It delves, said the *National Journal*, into "anything that moves, burns, or is sold." At the moment, legislation is percolating through the committee that affects financial markets, corporate takeovers, biotechnology, health insurance, the drug industry and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, nuclear power, telecommunications, big accounting firms, pesticides and food, and clean air. Small wonder that it's become the most sought-after committee assignment. "There are more applicants now than for Ways and Means," boasts Ron Wyden of Oregon, a liberal Democrat who's been on the committee since he came to the House in 1981.

Dingell insists that he hasn't stretched the committee's jurisdiction "one millimeter," but he has a reputation for aggrandizement of power. In 1986 he feuded with Rostenkowski and Sam Gibbons, who chairs the Ways and Means subcommittee on trade. Dingell wanted to win jurisdiction over trade legislation. He represents a Detroit district and favors protectionist leg-

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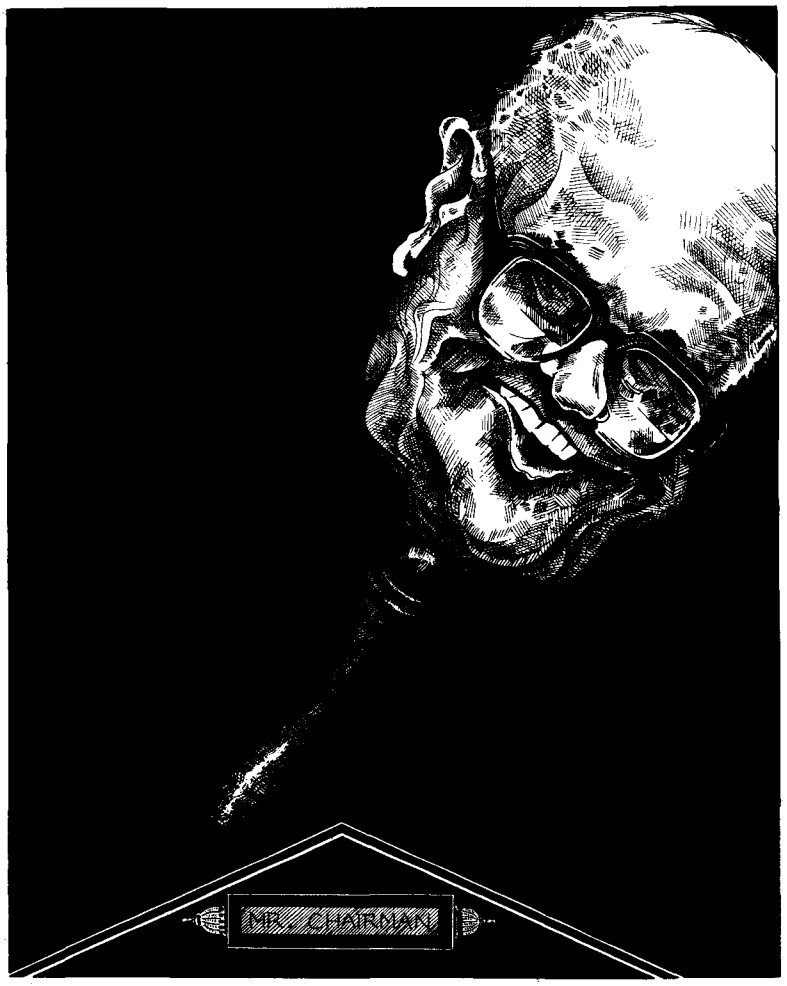
islation to insulate the auto industry and its workers from foreign competition. Gibbons, he said, "doesn't run a trade subcommittee, he runs a mortuary."

Dingell also encroached on the turf of the Armed Services Committee to probe defense contractors. He argued that his committee's oversight responsibility for the Securities and Exchange Commission gave it jurisdiction. "How can you do SEC oversight properly if you don't know what's going on with those publicly held companies that do defense work?" says Wyden. Les Aspin, the Armed Services chairman, was furious. But in the end Dingell's intervention gave Aspin a stronger hand in confronting the Pentagon and defense contractors. Armed Services is traditionally pro-Pentagon. Aspin was able to argue that it had to get tough, or Dingell might horn in again.

For all his prowess as a legislator, Dingell would be just another House grandee if it weren't for his investigative role. As a member of Energy and Labor's oversight subcommittee in 1975, he and John Moss of California, his closest friend in Congress but now retired, rebelled against the chairman, Harley Staggers. The subcommittee was moribund, and Dingell said Staggers shouldn't chair both it and the full committee. Staggers yielded the subcommittee to Moss. He retired in 1981 and Dingell took over the full committee—and kept the oversight subcommittee. Under Dingell, the subcommittee battered the Reagan administration more than any body of Congress.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Starting with tips from disgruntled career officials of the Environmental Protection Agency, Dingell probed the EPA and generated a public furor over its lack of enforcement practices. This led to the resignation of administrator Anne Burford and more than a dozen EPA appointees, and the perjury conviction of assistant administrator Rita Lavelle. Examining foreign influence in Washington, Dingell called Michael Deaver, the former Reagan aide, to testify. Deaver, who'd been hired by the government of Canada, was later convicted of perjury for his testimony. In 1984 the subcommittee focused on Victor Thompson, the president of the quasi-governmental U.S. Synthetic Fuels Corporation. Dingell said Thompson hadn't disclosed "unethical business activity" before he took over Synfuels. Thompson resigned. In his investigation of defense contractors, Dingell badly scarred General Dynamics, disclosing among other things that it had offered $100,000 in gifts to Adm. Hyman Rickover. The firm manufactures the Trident submarine, and for decades Rickover headed the Navy's submarine fleet. The Pentagon suspended payments to General Dynamics for a time.

The success of Dingell's subcommittee stems from his aggressiveness, perseverance, and loyalty to his staff of investigators. "He's the last of the kind to take on major interests, major corporations, and major agencies," says Pete Stockton, an investigator. "He'll back up the staff and follow through." This has gotten Dingell into trouble on occasion. One investigator, Brian McTigue, illegally taped a private conversation that Dingell later played at a subcommittee hearing to discredit a witness. In another foray, four investigators sent to Switzerland as part of the subcommittee's probe of insider trading had to be recalled when Swiss bankers protested their intrusion. And in investigating alleged fraud in scientific studies financed by the National Institutes of Health, Dingell exaggerated the significance of errors in a paper published by Dr. David Baltimore, a Nobel Prize-winning biologist.

Dingell is unapologetic about the subcommittee's excesses. He revels in his role of, as Paul Gigot of the *Wall Street Journal* puts it, "Congress's grand inquisitor." Dingell believes in congressional government. "The Founding Fathers intended that Congress was going to be the policy-maker," he says. "The executive branch was set up to carry out that policy." That interpretation would be news to most presidents, particularly two whom Dingell reveres, Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman. Dingell characterizes himself as the "last of

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the New Dealers." He is for big government and against deregulation. Government's job, he believes, is to protect the public against the abuses of the free market, whether they're produced by too much laissez-faire or by monopolies. Dingell distrusts power in the hands of corporations or the executive branch. (Absolute power corrupts, except on the Hill.) President Reagan let the private sector run amok, he says. "You put a big hunk of cheese in the middle of the room and the rats will come out and enjoy." The cheese in his analogy is government largess, gobbled up by defense contractors, greedy scientists, etc.

Despite his liberal populism, Dingell has many liberal critics, especially gun control advocates and environmentalists. He's an avid hunter and a board member of the National Rifle Association. For a decade, Dingell almost single-handedly thwarted efforts to enact stiffer clean air legislation. "I was not sent here to destitute my district or destroy the auto industry," he once said. Now, faced with a shift in the national mood and a president pushing clean air legislation, Dingell has changed course and taken control of the bill that is emerging from the House. First he endorsed Bush's proposal, but only after winning concessions from the White House. Dingell "worked very hard" to drum up Democratic co-sponsors, says Gary Andres, a White House lobbyist. Then, on October 2, he got the administration to agree to a compromise with environmental hard-liners on auto emission standards more stringent than Bush wanted. This assured Dingell of control of House forces when they meet with Senate leaders in conference on clean air, probably next year.

He sponsored early environmental legislation such as the National Environmental Protection Act of 1969 and the Endangered Species Act of 1973. But ecological concerns, he says, must be balanced by "protection of jobs and opportunity for people." In the Senate-House conference on toxic cleanup legislation in 1986, Dingell used the proxies of ten absent members to squelch nine others who wanted a stronger bill. When challenged on his use of proxies by James Florio of New Jersey, he refused to cite any authority.

Dingell doesn't like to be crossed. In 1987 half the jurisdiction of Florio's subcommittee was stripped away. James Scheuer of New York, second in seniority to Dingell on the committee, ranks low in Dingell's esteem. Dingell won't let him chair a subcommittee. Dale Kildee, a fellow Michigan Democrat, experienced Dingell's wrath in 1982 when he voted against a congressional pay raise supported by Dingell. "Kildee, I hope you're satisfied with your current committee assignments," Dingell shouted to him across the House floor. Kildee was trying to get on Ways and Means at the time. He still hasn't made it.

Until 1987 Dingell was threatened with losing control of his committee to Henry Waxman of California, a champion of stringent clean air enforcement. Speaker Tip O'Neill didn't like Dingell and loaded the committee with Waxmanites. "Once Dingell lost to Waxman on any issue, he thought he'd lose control of the committee," says a Dingell associate. Wright rescued Dingell. He put him on the Democratic steering and policy committee, which makes committee assignments. Three coal-state Democrats who shared Dingell's views, and not Waxman's, joined Energy and Commerce, and Dingell was safe. He's thought about running for majority leader, but he's not likely to be elected to a leadership post. He's bruised too many of his colleagues. At a dinner honoring Wright, he cut off Foley as he rose to speak. "Sit down," Dingell said. "I outrank you in seniority."

Still, Dingell has many admirers. "He's like a father figure to me," says Andres. On Energy and Commerce, there's a clique of younger members who are Dingell protégés. Republican Vin Weber of Minnesota says he, too, is "sort of a Dingell admirer. Congress needs a few strong leaders to bring some order to the chaos. He's one."

There's irony in Dingell's arrival as a political force in the post-liberal 1980s and 1990s. He's a 1950s liberal, allied with organized labor and leery of the impact on America of a globalized economy. But the deficit and tax reform have made Energy and Commerce, in Wyden's words, "the committee of the future." The deficit means, as Dingell puts it, "We aren't going to have much pork to ladle out." So the Appropriations Committee is diminished. And tax reform has left Ways and Means with less to do. "The major public policy issues are going to involve financial services, communications, health care, energy, technology, transportation, science," says Wyden. "They're regulatory issues. The question is what kind of regulatory framework will allow the private sector to harness technology and how can we use government in a cost-effective way when the market won't do it." More than anyone else in Congress, Dingell is positioned to answer.

A C-minus for Bush and the governors.

Sorry Summit

By Morton Kondracke

The debate over what to do about America's second-rate education system is beginning to look like a beer commercial—the one where one group of guys yells "tastes great!" and the other shouts back "less filling!" In the case of education, the Democrats yell "more money!" and the Republicans shout back "restructuring!" At least the beer ads sell Miller Lite. The education debate is getting us nowhere.

Since 1981 (no thanks to Ronald Reagan and George Bush) total education spending in the United States has

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risen 29 percent after inflation, with almost all the increases coming at the state level. At the same time, most states have attempted reforms of one kind or another. Yet average SAT scores are still 87 points lower than they were in 1963, and other tests show that American kids on average are more ignorant about more academic subjects than children in any other industrialized country.

At the same time, as a survey in *Time* shows, fewer than half the states have made a real dent in the reform agenda, which includes teacher and pupil competency testing, merit pay or other rewards for top teachers, greater rights for parents to choose the schools their children attend and more power in running the schools, bureaucracy reduction and greater management responsibility for principals, alternate certification systems to allow qualified outsiders into the teaching profession, and the establishment of performance standards for promotion and graduation. Various governors (notably Bill Clinton of Arkansas, Rudy Perpich of Minnesota, and Thomas Kean of New Jersey) have pioneered portions of the agenda, but no one state could be called a model for the nation.

To address the crisis, President Bush called a "summit" of the nation's governors, the first since FDR's during the Great Depression. Some potentially useful proposals were made in Charlottesville, but as soon as the TV lights went on the politicians reverted to form, with Democrats (led by New York's Mario Cuomo, on CBS) demanding more money from Washington, and Republicans (led by Education Secretary Lauro Cavazos, on ABC) saying that we already spend more, per pupil, than Japan or Germany, and what we need is more reform.

What the summit should have set forth was a firm and final stipulation of the obvious: that we need both more money and more reform. To attract smarter people to teaching, extend the school year, and expose all poor children (not just one-fifth) to Head Start is going to be expensive, and if Bush really means to be the "education president," he ought to help raise the money, even if it means the ultimate horror: new taxes.

There was a move beyond the buzztalk about money and reform to the establishment of national education "goals" and a pledge to establish "standards." The goals are to make the United States "internationally competitive" in preschool education, student academic performance, graduation rates, literacy, job preparation, teacher qualification, and school security. Clinton, co-chairman of the governors' education task force, said one standard might be to make the United States second or third in international performance rankings over ten years, instead of last, which presumably still concedes that Japan and South Korea will stay ahead. He said that in ten years our functional literacy rate should be 90 percent (the industrial world standard) instead of 70 percent, and that the dropout rate should be ten percent instead of 25 percent.

Goals and standards are nice—they amount to oh-so-solemn New Year's resolutions—but two more concepts urgently need to be added: "results" and "accountability," as the summit's bad boy, drug czar (and former education secretary) William Bennett urged at a press conference. Most of the media only focused on Bennett's crack that what he'd heard was "pap and things that rhyme with pap." But Bennett also said that he'd heard some good things at the closed summit session he attended, including the observation by one governor (it was Democrat Neal Goldschmidt of Oregon) that if he were allowed to spend existing federal funds and really run his state's education system free of detailed Washington regulation, he'd be willing to be voted in or out of office based on his state's performance. Bennett thinks that American education will never prosper unless the Goldschmidt principle applies to teachers, principals, and other school administrators: those who produce should be rewarded, those who don't should be fired.

The same, Bennett said, applies to public education in general: "I'd give the education reform movement another five years. If we're not able to get our schools back to where they were in 1963, after spending 40 percent more, than maybe we should just declare bankruptcy, give the people back their money, and let them start their own schools. That would be a radical way to have accountability." As usual, Bennett overstates, but to a point. What *do* we do if the summit's nice goals are never achieved? And how will we ever know whether they are or not?

Another, less radical idea for education reform—not discussed at the summit—comes from Chester Finn, Bennett's former research chief and now president of the board of governors of the federally funded (which is to say underfunded) National Assessment of Educational Progress, an independent group that conducts the only really dependable national tests of education performance. Finn says that America needs a shift in educational thinking from preoccupation with the resources put into the system toward the results produced. That is, there ought to be agreement nationwide on what children in each grade should know and a dependable system of testing to make sure they know it. The idea doesn't require a federally mandated national curriculum; it could just as easily develop as an agreement among the states, with a single test measuring results and providing a basis for accountability.

Right now each state or locality is free to choose which commercial educational performance test it wants to give its kids (Iowa, California, Stanford, etc.) and whether to participate in the NAEP, which is given to a sample of 170,000 children to determine average national performance. As a result, there's no way for parents and citizens accurately to compare their locality's performance with that of others around the country. A new study by John J. Cannell widely referred to as the "Lake Wobegon Report" shows that 48 of the 50 states are claiming to parents that their children are performing "above average." One reason is that security on commercial tests is so bad that exams often are distributed to schools months in advance of testing day, so that teach-

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ers can coach kids to make their schools' scores look good when the results come out in the newspaper.

Finn contends that there needs to be a dependable national test to measure the performance and progress of each child, classroom, school, district, and state. Scores for individual children and classrooms would be shared only with parents; the other scores would be revealed publicly and be the basis for accountability. He thinks the NAEP is the model, but lobbies for the commercial test publishers and local school boards have influenced Congress to forbid its use for district-by-district comparisons. Unlike other tests, the NAEP tries to find out how many kids achieve a certain level of knowledge that is constant from year to year. The others measure children against a floating national average. The NAEP also doesn't rely exclusively on multiple-choice questions, but includes a writing test and, for math, asks kids to show their work.

What we know from the NAEP test—and others—is that not only are many schools far below average, but also that the American average is woefully low. For example, only 20 percent of American high school seniors can write a simple letter, only 12 percent can arrange a series of fractions in order of size, only five percent can read a bus schedule, and only 3.5 percent could pass the graduation exam of a European academic high school. This has got to stop. If it doesn't, maybe we should exercise the ultimate sanction in Bennett's accountability principle and get ourselves a new education president.

Worker power in the 'workers' state.'

STRIKE'S BACK

By Diane P. Koenker

In July Mikhail Gorbachev congratulated the 400,000 striking coal miners in Siberia and the Ukraine for taking *perestroika* into their own hands. The strikers were promised raises and increased benefits, and they returned to work. But Azerbaijan's issues raised by these and other stoppages, including the rail blockade of Armenia, have not been resolved. Now Gorbachev is warning about the dangers posed by protesting workers. Calling for an emergency 15-month ban on strikes, he declared: "We cannot let the situation slip into anarchy. We cannot let anyone take our reforms as hostage." The Supreme Soviet—in what appears to be a genuine legislative compromise—rejected Gorbachev's proposal and passed a temporary ban instead, limited to strikes in transportation and other essential services.

The current uproar takes place against the background of a remarkable development: the emergence of the labor strike as a powerful political weapon for the first time since 1917. It is being used not only for industrial disputes but also in ethnic protests—in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Moldavia, and in Estonia, where Russian-speaking factory workers struck their plants to protest electoral laws that would disfranchise non-Estonians. Wildcat strikes have erupted among bus drivers, librarians, air traffic controllers, and auto workers.

Western labor economists theorize that strikes are "dysfunctions" in the collective bargaining process, a breakdown in the flow of information that permits each side to calculate its bargaining chances. A people's deputy from the Siberian coal fields, on the other hand, calls the recent strikes "a function of people driven to despair." But these stoppages reflect neither dysfunction nor desperation. They must be seen in the historical context of a state that bases its legitimacy on the struggle of the labor movement, and in whose revolutionary mythology the strike plays a cherished central role.

The czarist government carefully monitored strikes in industrial enterprises, sharply delineating nominally legal "economic" strikes (those over wages, hours, or work rules) and "political" strikes, which were always illegal and ruthlessly punished. Even so, political strikes accompanied surges of popular unrest in 1905, 1914, and 1917. In 1905 the first soviets emerged from strike committees organized to direct mass actions against the regime. But only with the fall of the czarist regime in March 1917 did Russian workers win de facto freedom to strike. It didn't last long.

The 1917 experience offers important clues to the current eruption of labor unrest. Although industry was nominally capitalist in 1917, Russia was at war. Ninety percent of industrial production was dedicated to the war effort, so labor unrest had an immediate impact on state interests. And it disrupted more than industrial production. With restrictions eased, strikes broke out in every walk of economic life, including workers who had never before been regarded as members of the proletariat. Laundresses, pharmacists, and shop assistants as well as metalworkers, textile-spinners, and coal miners launched long and vocal strikes during the ten months between the fall of the old regime and the Bolshevik seizure of power in November 1917.

The goals of the strikers were extraordinarily diverse. By the government's simplistic categorization, the strikes were almost all "economic," not political, reversing the pre-war balance. (In overthrowing the czar, workers had won democratic freedoms through which to express their political aspirations.) In an era of rampant wartime inflation, wage demands were foremost. But Russian workers also insisted on new workshop rules, decent treatment from their employers, and the right to organize. Although relatively few political claims were made directly on the government, many strikers demanded a clear reallocation of power within

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the workplace. The experience of going out on strike, and often winning their claims, gave workers a new sense of their own power in society. Winning such power was perhaps more important than nominal wage increases, as shown by the huge scope of strike activity in the weeks before the November revolution. At a time when economic activity had plummeted, work stoppages would seem to have offered workers little bargaining power. Yet they continued to strike in greater numbers than ever.

In 1917 there were no laws regulating strike activity. The old czarist legislation had been swept away with the czar himself. The new rules of labor-management interaction had to be forged in the very process of conflict, a process that in turn reflected the acute struggle for political power throughout society.

In "socialist" Russia, if one is to believe the dogma parroted even today by Soviet labor experts, strikes were no longer necessary. They were confined to the archives of the labor movement, rusting weapons of an obsolete class struggle. In fact, of course, strikes continued to erupt. Political strikes against the Bolshevik regime during the years of the Russian civil war were forcefully repressed. After 1921 strikes continued to function as collective bargaining tools against both private and state employers in the mixed economy of the New Economic Policy.

Still, after the revolution, strike activity diminished. The new system provided an elaborate mediation framework for resolving individual disputes. In the 1930s, when organized protest was tantamount to counterrevolution and was punished accordingly, workers resorted to absenteeism, slowdowns, and massive unplanned mobility from factory to factory. Voluntary resignation from factories was discouraged by a host of government sanctions in the 1930s, but the urgent need for labor in the period of the five-year plans assured that this huge labor turnover would continue largely unpunished.

After the death of Stalin, labor received some concessions from the state. "Easy plans" replaced the high-tempo plans of the early 1930s, and heavy demands on work discipline and productivity were relaxed. The strike, however, remained an unacceptable form of bargaining. Strike reports were banned from the Soviet press, and strikers risked grave repression. Under *glasnost,* some of these stories are beginning to come out. The newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* recently confirmed that a strike over food shortages in 1962 in the southern city of Novocherkassk had been put down by soldiers who machine-gunned at least 20 demonstrators and then secretly buried them. Rumors of this massacre had always been denied by Soviet authorities. In most cases, however, strikes led to punishment of union and Party officials rather than repression of workers.

Under Gorbachev the perceived risks of labor protest have dramatically declined, and workers have returned to the strike as a tactic. Although there are no statistics to provide a complete picture, wildcat strikes in the Soviet Union have been on the rise for several years. The timing of this summer's outburst can be explained by the perceived gap between deteriorating material conditions in all parts of the Soviet Union (especially outside Moscow) and the tremendous promise of democracy, seen in May and June in the daily televised broadcasts of the sessions of the new Congress of People's Deputies.

The coal miners in Siberia and the Ukraine had long complained bitterly through official channels about unsafe conditions and the poverty of their material lives; they had also joined the millions of Soviet voters in sending representatives to the new national congress. Neither step had done much to relieve their immediate grievances or even to call attention to their plight. The new openness of the Soviet media raised expectations that the miners' strikes would not be repressed and that their claims would be heard.

Thus the summer strikes, far from acts of despair, were an assertion of political power through direct, publicized economic action. This power was magnified because the strike is such a highly charged moral as well as political act in Soviet culture. The Soviet Union's Communist system has been based on an ethic of production, not consumption. Only high levels of production could lead to the defense of the revolution, the defense of the state, and, last (and it often seemed least), to better material welfare for all. A strike, the deliberate withdrawal of productive labor, thus violates the basic ethos of the regime—even as it echoes the mythologized heroism of the regime's founding.

Unsurprisingly, government reports about the miners' actions stressed the ruble costs of lost production, the damage to other industrial sectors when scheduled coal deliveries were not made, and the costs other workers would bear. The regime has used such arguments to justify strike limits for 70 years. So it is all the more significant that the coal miners chose so dramatically to press their claims for consumption by undermining the regime's commitment to production.

Strikes serve as a school of organization. Television reporting hastened the spread of these stoppages across thousands of miles of Soviet steppeland, but it was the mounting of successful organized protests without the aid of the established (and useless) trade unions that galvanized a new activism among the rank and file. The central trade union leadership has now promised renewed attention and reform. But the strike leaders are already talking about independent trade unions. New faces have appeared to challenge the power of the entrenched trade union bureaucracy.

Most official reporting has played down these political implications. Still burdened by old stereotypes, the Soviet press has described the strikers' goals as purely material, or at best "economic and social." A published list of nearly 40 demands, however, reveals that these strikes concern far more than higher pay or better access to goods. Like the workers' demands of 72 years

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ago, they address issues of human dignity. Miners demand that the hazards of the profession be recognized by adding silicosis and tuberculosis to the list of work-related diseases, and the right for families to take their paid annual vacations together rather than separately as the production schedule dictates. Workers have addressed fundamental political issues as well, ones directly related to the economic reforms that have proved so resistant to implementation from above. All of the strikers have sought greater power to manage their local economic affairs without central intervention. (At the same time, some have lashed out against another of Gorbachev's reforms, demanding the elimination of cooperative retail shops, which they see as unjustly profiting from the shortages of the consumer economy.)

Obviously, the explicit purpose of the Soviet legislature's temporary ban on strikes (a comprehensive bill on labor issues and strikes is pending) is to suppress the biggest stoppages. But the unmistakable implication is that in "normal" times, strikes would be a legitimate part of the give-and-take of industrial relations in the Soviet Union. Strikes are shaping the contours of Gorbachev's revolution, as they did in the revolution of 1917.

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The 'intifada' comes home.

ISRAEL'S ARABS

By Yosef Goell

Israel's attention and that of the Western media have been riveted since December 9, 1987, on the *intifada*, the uprising among the 1.5 million Palestinian Arabs in the territories occupied by Israel since the Six-Day War of June 1967. Much less attention has been paid to the effects of that uprising on the 600,000 Palestinian Arabs who are Israeli citizens, residing within Israel proper.

For years Israeli savants have convened academic conferences to debate whether the Israeli Arabs view themselves as Israelis, as Arabs, as Palestinians, or as combinations of the above. Just as the Arab debacle in the Six-Day War was the critical factor in the growth of a new sense of Palestinian nationalism among the Arabs of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the *intifada* has infused a profound awareness in Israeli Arabs of their Palestinian identity. This was perhaps best exemplified in a recent interview on Israel State Television with a 12-year-old Israeli Arab musical prodigy. The emcee asked him, not too delicately, whether he considered himself an Israeli, an Arab, or a Palestinian. (It would be the equivalent of asking an American Jew, "Are you an American or a Jew?") Unhesitatingly, the boy answered, "I am a Palestinian who *lives* in Israel." Until a few years ago the Arab parents of such a boy, whose budding career is being fostered by Israeli institutions, would have coached him to say, "I'm an Israeli Arab," or "an Arab Israeli."

Several weeks into the *intifada*, which was raging in the occupied territories only a few kilometers from Arab towns and villages in Israel, and was being broadcast nightly into Arab living rooms over Israeli TV, the newly organized leadership of the Israeli Arabs, comprising Arab local authorities and the six Arab Knesset members, organized two day-long general strikes in support of the rebelling Palestinians. There were mass turnouts on both days. Committees of Israeli Arabs also organized to provide medical and other humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians of the *intifada*, who found themselves increasingly under siege by the Israeli army.

Many Israeli Jews at first expressed understanding of the power of these kinship ties. But as the *intifada* etched the lines of Arab-Jewish hostility more deeply, that understanding faded, in part because people came to equate support for the Palestinians with hostility toward Israeli soldiers. The average Israeli Jew has teenage sons and daughters who do three years of conscript duties in the army, and himself may be one of the many between the ages of 21 and 40 who have been called up for stints of reserve duty in the territories. Israel's Arabs had never before dared show such open hostility toward Israel's armed forces, or such open support for its Arab enemies.

Then there is the question of how much the *intifada* has encouraged violent behavior among Israeli Arabs. A year and a half after it began, the government minister in charge of Arab affairs reported that there had been over 600 *intifada*-linked acts of violence by Israeli Arabs. Those included stone-throwing at vehicles in areas heavily populated by Arabs, the much less frequent throwing of gasoline bombs at such vehicles, the torching of forests throughout the country, random attacks on Jewish passers-by in such mixed locales as the Jaffa area of Tel Aviv, and acts carried out for clandestine PLO cells.

In one sense, these numbers are negligible. During the same time, there were tens of thousands of similar *intifada*-linked acts committed in the occupied territories. Further, there has been a vast difference between the often lethal response of the Israeli army to violent acts in the territories and the more restrained police response within Israel. Still, the number of violent political incidents involving Israeli Arabs must be compared with the markedly lower number in previous years, and with the almost total absence of such incidents before the early 1980s (during which there was an

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unprecedented spate of kidnappings, torture, and murders of about a dozen Israeli Jews by Israeli Arabs).

The throwing of stones and even a few gasoline bombs has not constituted much of a real threat. But it has raised fears among Israeli Jews of the possible emergence of an Arab fifth column that in time of war could cut the critical Wadi Ara road connecting the coastal plain with the Jezreel Valley and Galilee. These fears were heightened by a case this spring in which Arabs from the Central Galilee town of Sakhnin hurled grenades at a police car.

Another source of unease has been the burning by Israeli Arabs of many square miles of forest in the past two summers. The reforestation of the country, which had been denuded of its ancient trees in the previous century, has always been a central motif of the Zionist vision of "greening the desert." Many Jews have seen the torchings as a statement that some Israeli Arabs so hate the Jews that they would rather burn down the country than share it. Some Israeli Arab leaders have set up patrols to thwart Arab arsonists. But even moderate leaders have rejected proposals for joint Arab-Jewish patrols.

In July the Israeli establishment discovered that "*intifada* summer camps" were being run for Arab children in Galilee. The organization of such camps by the extremist Ibna el-Balad (Sons of the Country), identified with the anti-Arafat PLO "Rejectionist Front," came as no surprise. What was shocking was the fact that the mainline Israel Communist Party, which has long expressed its Arab oppositionist tendencies through legal means, was involved in running them. There were reports that the elementary schoolchildren in these camps were being taught to adulate mass murderers, such as the Arab who killed 16 passengers by commandeering a bus and steering it over a precipice, and the Egyptian soldier who shot and killed five Israeli vacationers, including children, in Egyptian Sinai several years ago.

Many people caught up in national confrontations react to community pressures to conform to demands by radical minorities. Anyone familiar with the atmosphere in Israeli Arab communities during the *intifada* could attest to the powerful nature of these pressures. But what does the Israeli Arab "man in the street" feel about maintaining his personal balance between his Israeli and Palestinian identities? A glimpse into the soul of the Israeli Arab community can be made in the quadrennial national election to the Knesset.

Israeli Arabs have always had and used the vote. During Israel's first two decades, Arab voters—who could at that time fairly be described as an essentially premodern, predemocratic population—divided their votes between a large number of Arab dignitary parties set up as fronts for the ruling Labor Party, and the Communist Party, which became the focus of Arab oppositionist tendencies. During the 1970s and early '80s, as the cause of Palestinian nationalism caught on with the younger Israeli Arabs, the power of the Communist Party grew, and in the 1984 elections the Party was joined by another radical Arab party, the Progressive List for Peace. These two oppositionist parties, which openly vied for the support of Yasir Arafat, attained a high point in the history of Israeli Arab nationalist radicalism by garnering slightly over half of the Arab vote. Meanwhile, the small dignitaries' lists, which the Labor Party used to run to attract separate blocs of Muslim, Christian, bedouin, and regional Arab voters, had largely disappeared, and the vast majority of the Arab voters who did not vote for the Communists or the PLP voted directly for Labor or for other "Zionist" parties to its left.

In the 1988 elections, close to one year into the *intifada*, the Communist Party, the PLP, and a new oppositionist list, Abdul Wahab Darawshe's Arab Democratic Party, which joined the pro-PLO parties, together won 59 percent of the Arab vote. Support for "Zionist" parties fell to 41 percent, but even this much support was considered remarkable, confounding pundits who had expected the "PLO parties" to make a clean sweep. This expectation was based on a reading of the atmosphere in Arab towns and villages and on the clear messages emanating from the PLO leadership, which called on Israeli Arab voters to vote their nationalist emotions. It was assumed that the Arab parties, running on the twin issues of identification with the PLO and support for the *intifada*, would be swamped with support.

Even the 59 percent figure was not quite what it seemed, for one in ten of those voters had voted for Darawshe, a former Labor Party Knesset member who had been at pains to project an ambiguous image during the campaign. On the one hand, he openly competed with the Communists and the PLP for PLO support. He even outdid those two parties in trying to woo the votes of the growing number of Islamic fundamentalists. On the other hand, Darawshe clearly sought to differentiate himself from the other two oppositionist Arab parties by projecting the pragmatic, nonideological image of a party that was prepared to participate in a Labor-led coalition consisting mainly of Zionist parties.

The split Arab vote of 1988 is consistent with earlier, more impressionistic, analyses of Israeli Arab opinion. The picture is of a significant minority—perhaps as much as one-fifth of the total—who are deeply hostile to Israel and could potentially serve as a subversive element in a future war. A similar minority is made up of Israeli Arabs who have come to terms with their status as members of an ethnic minority in a Jewish state. They see their main interest as achieving as good a life as possible for themselves and their children within Israel. These Arabs may draw encouragement from the fact that, despite the demeaning cases of institutionalized and personal anti-Arab discrimination and the signs of growing anti-Arab hostility among some Jews, living in a Jewish Israel during four decades of an Arab-Israel conflict has made them

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the best-off Arabs in the Middle East, in terms of both material and personal security.

The majority of Israeli Arabs, perhaps 60 percent or more, find themselves pulled at times toward one position and at other times toward the opposite. The *intifada* has undoubtedly drawn a significant part of that middle majority toward the pole of anti-Israeli national radicalism. What is unclear is how permanent that shift will prove to be.

The *intifada* will not go on forever. Although the intensity of nationalist emotions can't be expected to disappear completely in the near future, by the latter half of 1989 there were clear signs that the violence of the *intifada* was on the wane. What will be its residue? Clearly it has had a detrimental effect on Arab-Jewish relations within Israel and was a serious setback for the tortuous process of Arab integration into Israel.

The test for Israel's political leadership is whether it will prove wise and flexible enough, even under provocation, to combine the need for stringent surveillance of the extremist elements among the Israeli Arabs with the implementation of magnanimous policies intended to woo the middle majority in the direction of fuller integration into Israel. Arab Israeli political leaders, for their part, will be confronted with a test of their wisdom when they face the choice between addressing the daily problems of their Israeli Arab constituents, for which they will need Jewish allies, and adopting the emotionally satisfying but dangerous stance of support for the PLO and for Israel's other Arab enemies. As difficult as the choice will be, they will find that they cannot have it both ways.

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Silent Sam's peregrinations for 'perestroika.'

MOSCOW ON THE HUD

By Mark Hosenball

The string-pullers in the Reagan White House weren't looking for much in the way of dramatic new initiatives when they installed Samuel R. Pierce as secretary of housing and urban development, and they were hoping for even less. "Silent Sam" Pierce, they figured, would be a passive administrator who could be relied upon to sit around placidly as the programs of his department were whittled away. As we now know, Pierce's talent for inaction also extended to sitting around (or worse) as Republican influence-peddlers got rich off housing programs intended to benefit needy Americans. But the popular image of Pierce as a man so disengaged from his work that he contented himself with watching soap operas at the office is misleading. The truth is that Samuel Pierce was energetically pursuing a housing agenda, albeit one a little different from—and far more ambitious than—the one his department is nominally charged with. He was one of the early builders of the New Détente, an active proponent of *perestroika* who saw himself as one of the architects of a great global structure of peace between East and West.

Pierce's initial interest in foreign affairs probably stemmed from a Cabinet secretary's instinctive desire to take advantage of the perquisites of office. But Pierce and a handful of top aides quickly came to believe that HUD was a critical engine of East-West cooperation. The idea was that HUD could forge a new bond with the Soviet people by teaching them modern American construction methods that could improve their daily lives. Americans too could benefit from such an exchange, the theory went, by taking advantage of the Russians' unique experience in building housing and industry in cold climates and earthquake zones. When Pentagon officials suggested that HUD's venture in diplomacy might be less than helpful to American interests, Pierce fought a Kissinger-style battle with national security officials to protect his prerogatives. Amazingly, for a while Pierce appeared to be winning, though ultimately he was outmaneuvered by one of Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger's hardline advisers on Soviet affairs, Richard Perle. The record of this bureaucratic gamesmanship can be found in thousands of pages of Pierce's official correspondence that Jack Kemp, the new HUD secretary, has made public in an effort to purge his department of his predecessor's dubious legacy.

From the outset of his official career as a traveling salesman for the American way of housing and urban development, Pierce revealed himself as a man of eclec-

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tic interests. The first of his foreign voyages, in mid-1982, was far more than the obligatory junket to Europe to look at the Paris Metro. He embarked on a month-long 'round the world tour—taking himself and an eight-member entourage to Tokyo, Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Wuxi, Gangzhou, Hong Kong, Singapore, Bahrain, Cairo, Alexandria, Vienna, and Frankfurt. The main purpose of this excursion, Pierce explained in a letter to Chinese Construction Minister Han Guang, was to "discuss the management of large cities, intergovernmental relationships, and new construction technologies." Eventually, HUD planned to produce a "Chinese-English Glossary of Terms In Housing, Urban Planning, and Construction Management," according to one HUD document.

Later that year, replying to a letter from Washington lawyer Carl Shipley, who was trying to interest HUD and other Cabinet departments in a trans-African pipeline project, Pierce noted that he had a "continuing interest in such matters affecting Africa, Europe, and the United States," and added with a hint of boastful pride—and of bigger projects to come—that his department was "routinely informed of the strategic initiatives of the Soviets" through its participation in a State Department "interagency" committee.

In 1983 Pierce made two foreign excursions. He visited Paris in the spring to chair an international conference on urban affairs. Several months later, as the Reagan Cabinet's sole black, he represented the United States at the celebration of Kenya's second decade of independence; according to a classified State Department cable, members of his delegation included the "Honorable" Anne Burford, later disgraced as head of the Environmental Protection Agency. In 1984 he was off to Asia again, this time to celebrate the Singapore stock exchange's decision to open trading in U.S. Ginny Mae securities. While in the Far East, he also stopped off in Tokyo to meet with "potential investors and Japanese government officials," a State Department cable later reported.

To help arrange these global peregrinations, Pierce set up his own mini-State Department in a corner of HUD's labyrinthine headquarters building. This was headed by an "assistant secretary for international affairs" named Theodore Britton Jr., a former Nixon appointee as envoy to Barbados, who expected his subordinates to address him by the courtesy title "Ambassador." Britton's notion of HUD's role in foreign policy clearly was as grandiose as Pierce's. In a 1983 memo he advised his boss: "I would like to discreetly begin offering you a few resumes of people who I feel would be capable and interesting to you—for this work. These would be high level diplomatic types with some housing or urban expertise."

Although Pierce's initial overseas excursions kept him in the Third World and Western Europe, by 1984 he managed to insert himself into U.S.-Soviet relations. He found a ready vehicle for HUD's initiative in fostering East-West accord: a 1974 treaty, signed by Richard Nixon and Aleksei Kosygin, in which the U.S. and Soviet leaders agreed to "develop cooperation in the fields of housing and other construction." Even at the height of Nixonian détente, the superpowers evidently did not invest this treaty with much importance: only two U.S.-Soviet housing conferences were convened between the day the treaty was signed and December 1979, when Jimmy Carter threw all of Détente I into limbo after the Russian invasion of Afghanistan.

Nonetheless, when President Reagan, in a throwaway line in a June 1984 speech on U.S.-Soviet relations, announced that steps were being taken "to revive our agreements for cooperation in environmental protection, housing, health, and agriculture," Pierce and his aides seized the opportunity. With strong encouragement from June Koch, assistant HUD secretary for research and development (and wife of Noel Koch, the top anti-terrorism expert in Weinberger's Defense Department), HUD embarked on a series of bilateral negotiations with the Soviet government. These culminated in the establishment of a half dozen U.S.-Soviet "working groups" on such issues as "construction in seismic areas" and "construction under complicated climatic and geological conditions." Koch, with Pierce's backing, enlisted experts from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Science Foundation, and the General Services Administration to participate in these committees.

In September 1985 Pierce himself and a 20-member entourage paid a ten-day official visit to Russia to sign a document certifying the "beginning of a new period of cooperation." According to his official papers, Pierce also wanted to "expand the commercial potential" of the HUD-Soviet relationship, so he took "six representatives of diverse commercial interests" with him on his mission. The highlights of the trip, as recorded by Pierce aides, included a wreath-laying at the Monument to Heroic Defenders of Leningrad, a performance of the Kirov Ballet, a visit to the "world-famous Moscow circus," an inspection tour of a "workers' resort apartment complex on the Black Sea" in Odessa, and a "brief stop at the huge and very impressive Glory Memorial" in Kiev. Pierce also found time to tour Moscow's main sewage treatment plant. His Soviet chaperons included the chairman and vice chairman of the Soviet state construction committee and the vice chairman of the State Committee for Scientific and Technical Cooperation. The American Embassy held a gala reception for Pierce and his Russian interlocutors, although the U.S. ambassador, Arthur Hartman, was out of town at the time.

HUD officials were impressed by the seriousness with which the Russians took these negotiations. In a "Limited Official Use" cable sent to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow prior to Pierce's arrival, they pointed out that during a series of U.S.-Soviet meetings held to plan the Pierce visit, the Russians had displayed "marked restraint . . . in alcohol consumption. At lunch on the first day there was no alcohol whatever—no beer, wine,

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vodka served: remarkable. . . . Such moderate drinking is a sharp departure from behavior at bilateral functions in the late 1970s."

Within days of his return to Washington, Pierce sent a glowing letter to President Reagan informing him that "years of Soviet political propaganda seem not to have daunted the desire of Soviet technicians and citizens to work with their American counterparts. These kind [sic] of cooperative exchange agreements seem to tap a part of Soviet society we appear to miss in most of our official channels." The president's response is not available, but a few months later, in a letter to Defense Secretary Weinberger, Pierce claimed that he had "reported to the President and Cabinet" about his dealings with the Soviets. He told Weinberger he now planned to go ahead with an expanded program of U.S.-Soviet exchanges on construction technology, and expected the Pentagon, in the form of the Army Corps of Engineers, to "meet its commitments" under the exchange program.

Weinberger's initial reaction was skeptical but indulgent. In a letter classified "For Official Use Only," he told Pierce he would allow Army Engineers to attend HUD meetings with the Soviets provided they "go primarily in a listening mode." But he also expressed concern that some of the projects HUD planned to discuss with the Soviets "may involve exchange of technology which may bear on national security." Pierce subsequently assured Richard Perle, who had expressed reservations about the arrangement, "We, indeed, expect to be learning from the Soviets rather than the other way around." Perle recalled recently: "There was always a concern that we would teach them construction techniques that had some military applications. The technology for certain concrete structures can be important for hardening underground shelters and missile silos." He also believed that the HUD exchanges were a tremendous boondoggle. "I thought it was ludicrous to spend one nickel of DOD money on the absurd premise that the Soviets had something to teach us about housing."

In any event, a U.S. team led by a senior scientist from the Corps of Engineers eventually took off on a ten-day visit to Leningrad and Siberia. The 91-page official report of this excursion included pictures of the American tourists visiting an ice road at Yakutsk, and of a small earth dam near the Permafrost Institute in Yakutsk; the accompanying caption noted that "thermal pipes are used to develop permafrost core and foundation." The cost for the delegation was $17,467, courtesy of the American taxpayer. The gifts presented by the visitors to their hosts included ten hand-held solar calculators, three plaques, ten ball point pens, one Corps of Engineers plate, and numerous Corps of Engineers lapel pins.

With elaborate itineraries arranged by HUD, Soviet and American delegations began to crisscross the Atlantic with some regularity. Pierce hosted a top-level Soviet delegation in Washington in June 1986. At a dinner at the Hay Adams Hotel that Pierce threw in the Soviets' honor, he hosted Yuri Dubinin, the new Soviet ambassador to Washington, for what a HUD memo called Dubinin's "first official engagement."

In November Pierce took a 32-member American delegation back to Moscow with him. On the way home the entourage stopped in Paris for a three-day conference on private-sector initiatives. "Ambassador" Britton, Pierce's international affairs adviser, warned that security was a "top concern" at the conference, and that Pierce might want to "bring your own security"; Otis Bowen, secretary of health and human services, was also attending, Britton noted, and he planned "to have three security officers with him and his wife." Exactly what security arrangements Pierce finally made are unrecorded. But official travel records show that on a later trip to Moscow, Pierce took with him two agents from the office of HUD's inspector general as bodyguards. (This might explain why that office was slow in exposing agency malfeasance.)

All of this activity was supposed to lead not only to improved U.S.-Soviet relations but to a revitalized American economy. The Soviets were planning a big construction industry trade show in Moscow for the spring of 1987. Pierce and his top aides hoped to make this a showcase for American construction technology, and a business opportunity for American companies eager to break into the Soviets' vast, unexploited market.

Unfortunately, what was supposed to be HUD's finest hour turned out to be an enormous embarrassment. The first sign of trouble came when the right-wingers at the Defense Department, led by Perle, decided that the participation of Army Engineers in Pierce's diplomatic designs had gone far enough. In March 1987, at Perle's instigation, the Army informed Pierce that it was pulling out of HUD's U.S.-Soviet working groups on the grounds that the Russians might be using the exchanges to "gain information useful . . . in the acquisition of U.S. military related technology and know how [sic]."

Pierce decided to take a firm stand. Somehow he managed to enlist the support of Secretary of State George Shultz and, according to former Reagan administration officials, together they wrote a still-classified letter to Frank Carlucci, then White House national security adviser. The Cabinet secretaries warned that the developing new relationship between the United States and Mikhail Gorbachev's Russia could be jeopardized if the Pentagon stopped the Army from participating in HUD-Soviet exchanges. Sources sympathetic to HUD also leaked a story to the *Washington Times* hinting that U.S.-Soviet arms talks, as well as U.S. participation in the Moscow construction fair, could hang in the balance. " 'BAD FAITH' ON CONSTRUCTION CALLED CLOUD OVER ARMS TALKS," warned the détente-minded headline in the normally right-wing Moonie newspaper.

Carlucci was persuaded. He reportedly sent a letter to Weinberger ordering the Army to resume its involve-

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ment in HUD diplomacy. A gloating Assistant HUD Secretary Koch informed Deputy Defense Secretary Will Taft that she was "pleased to learn from the National Security Council about the Defense Department's continuing participation in the exchange program with the Soviet government." But the Army informed HUD that it would only let its engineers resume participation in U.S.-Soviet exchanges if certain conditions were laid down to prevent the leakage of sensitive information. "No information of military value will be shared," Assistant Army Secretary Robert Dawson warned Pierce in an April 1987 letter. "This includes but is not limited to information on construction in permafrost, construction of harbors, aircraft runways, or other transportation facilities, improvements to road and rail networks, establishment of work camps and support facilities, and construction of buried structures." These conditions turned out to be so rigorous that HUD and its Soviet interlocutors still have not managed to provide the Pentagon with the assurances it sought.

Meanwhile, HUD's scheme to showcase American technology at the Moscow trade fair turned into a fiasco. Although more than 100 American companies participated in the Russian exhibition, and Pierce himself made an appearance, only eight firms received orders as a result, and half of those were worth $25,000 or less. An American mobile-home manufacturer complained to Congress that, at HUD's behest, it had shipped one of its $38,000 prototypes to the Moscow trade fair. HUD paid the freight over, but nobody bought the mobile home, and HUD refused to pay for its return. The manufacturer finally wrote off its product as a gift to the Soviet Ministry of Tourism.

Allegations also surfaced of KGB involvement in the trade show. Not long after the exhibition, the CIA published an unclassified paper alleging that the U.S.S.R. Chamber of Commerce, which runs the exhibition hall where the fair was held, is heavily infiltrated by KGB spies. The CIA said that the chamber's chairman, with whom Koch met on at least two occasions (according to her own memoranda to Pierce), was a lieutenant general in the KGB reserves and once headed the Russian intelligence agency's training school. Koch recently claimed that the CIA alerted her to the KGB connection only after her meetings with alleged Russian intelligence agents.

It was Koch's bad luck that, when Congress finally got around to digging into the HUD mess left by Pierce, the Moscow trade show farce was one of the first targets for investigation. Koch's dealings with the Soviets were subjected to immediate dissection. Investigators from the General Accounting Office discovered that a few months after the trade show, Koch left HUD to set up a consulting company. Before leaving the government payroll, the investigators said, she sent a letter to the Soviets expressing a desire to continue working with them in a "private" capacity. Her firm also issued a brochure describing itself as having been chosen by the U.S.S.R. Chamber of Commerce to organize U.S. participation in Russian trade fairs and seminars. GAO gumshoes concluded that Koch may have violated federal law, though she has denied ethical lapses. Koch's husband, the Pentagon's former anti-terrorism czar, called the ethics allegations against his wife a "crock of shit," and also denied a GAO allegation that he was an officer in his wife's business.

Koch's former boss continued to pursue his foreign policy vision into the waning hours of his Cabinet tenure. Not long after the trade show, Pierce embarked on another excursion to Moscow, where he and the first deputy chairman of the Soviet State Building Committee "reported on current trends in housing and urban development in each country and on prospects for further development of cooperation between the two nations in these fields." And just three months before George Bush's inauguration, Pierce hosted another visit of Soviet housing and construction officials to Washington, during which he subjected his guests to "a speech on Current Policies in Housing and Urban Development in the U.S. and on the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Cooperative program." Before leaving town, the Russians were treated to a visit to Arlington Cemetery and dinner at the Officers' Club at nearby Fort Myer.

A month before leaving office, Pierce wrote to Secretary of State Shultz requesting that the treaty under which HUD had pursued its foreign policy be renewed for five years. And one of his last official acts as HUD secretary was to send a letter to Soviet Ambassador Dubinin, thanking him for his "personal interest in and support of" HUD's unique contribution to "improved relations between our two countries."

In a summary of activity under the HUD-Soviet exchange program during Pierce's final year of office, HUD underlings later reported that U.S. representatives had spent a total of 283 days on trips to Russia and that Soviet delegates had spent a total of 562 days in the United States.

Pierce isn't saying much these days about this or anything else, but it would be surprising if he did not regard himself as an unsung hero of the prospective post-cold war era, a prophet of *perestroika* without honor or reward. And indeed, his work in bettering U.S.-Soviet understanding may not long outlive the Reagan era. The Bush administration decided not to follow Pierce's advice to renew the U.S.-Soviet housing treaty for five years, and instead extended it for only six months, until the end of this year. Kemp is said to have mixed feelings about more permanent arrangements. The catharsis Kemp has set off at HUD also has resulted in some changes in the bureaucratic mechanisms left behind by Sam Pierce. The office of international affairs is being phased out and its employees sacked or transferred. Even Theodore Britton, Pierce's top diplomatic fixer, has not escaped Kemp's cleansing broom: HUD may now have the only accounting department in Washington with a midlevel functionary who expects to be addressed as "Ambassador." •

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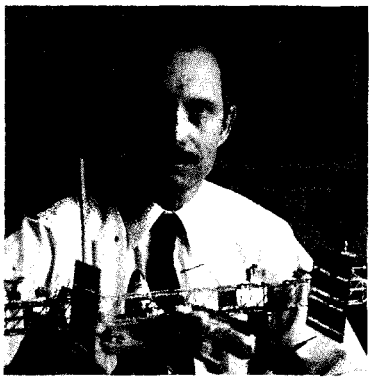

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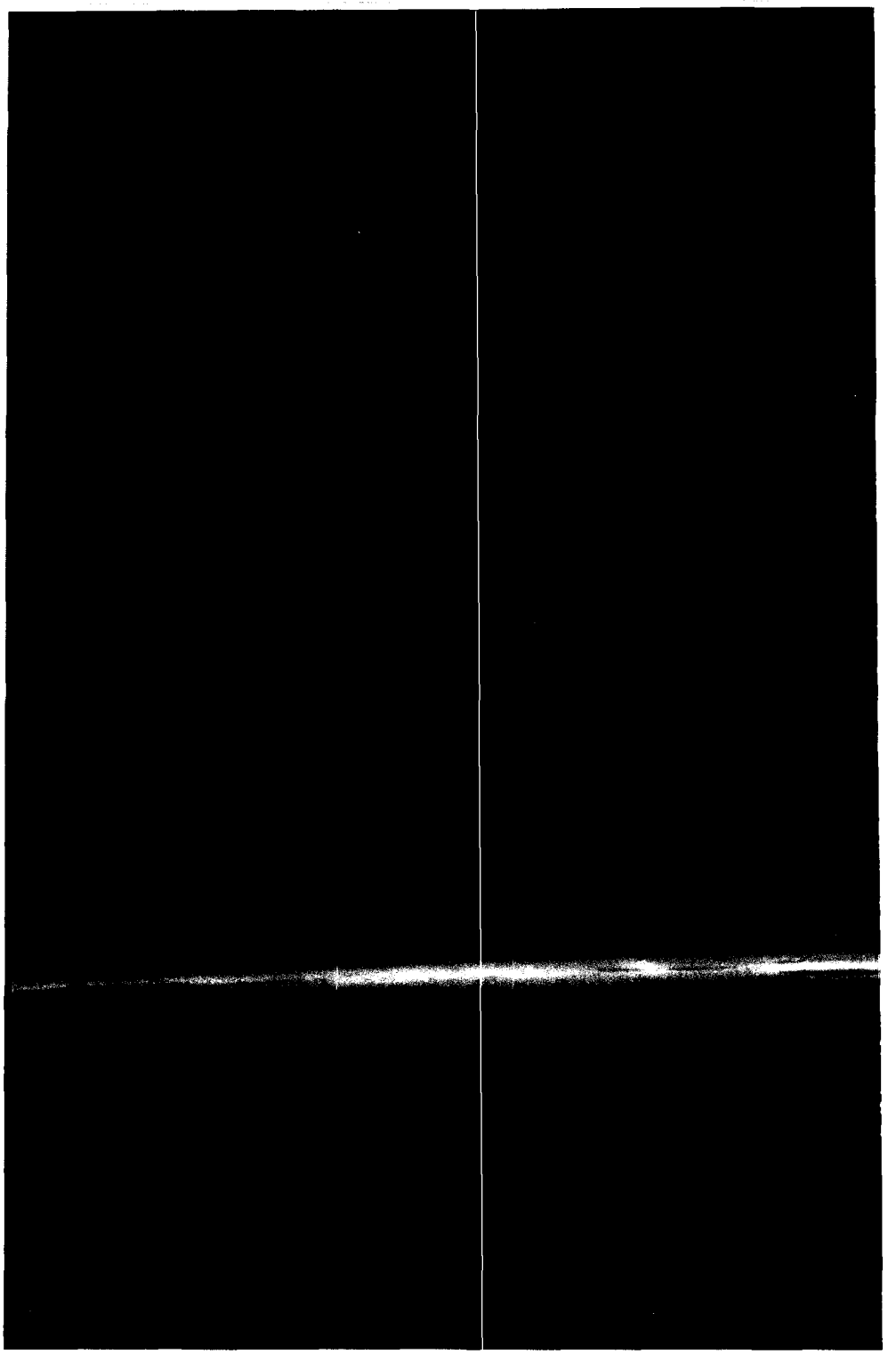

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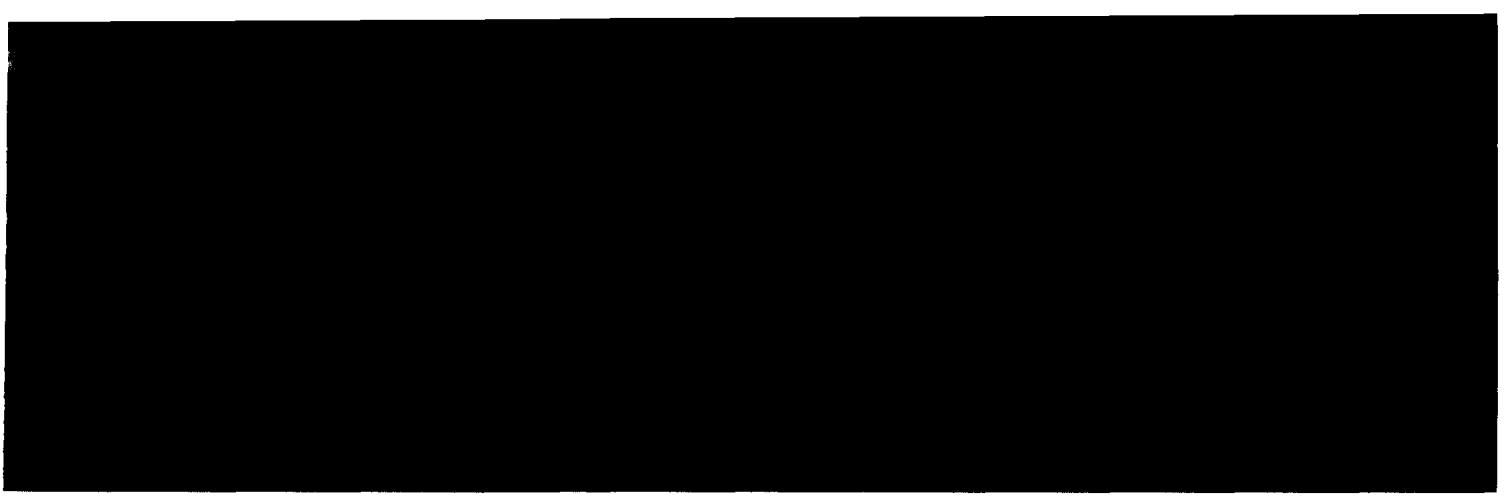

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Outside and Inside the Law

John Sayles gets fertile ideas for screenplays, but they never grow sufficiently. *The Brother from Another Planet*, *Matewan*, *Eight Men Out*, to name a few, all had interesting subjects, and all got thinner as they went along. Sayles as screenwriter is something like an actor who does a terrific first reading of a role, then doesn't develop much after that.

Once again he has bobbled a good idea. **Breaking In** (Samuel Goldwyn) is not a particularly novel subject, but it begins promisingly—and then leads to very little. Kenneth Burke says somewhere that form is the arousal and satisfaction of expectation. Sayles once again supplies the first requirement, overlooks the second, and ends up formless.

The setting is Portland, Oregon, looking very fresh in Michael Coulter's camera. A 61-year-old burglar, Burt Reynolds (lying upward about his age), is on a job in someone's home when a young housebreaker surprises Reynolds and himself by coming upon Reynolds at work on a wall safe. The young man, Casey Siemaszko, is not a burglar: he is by profession an auto mechanic. He just likes to break into empty houses, help himself to food, watch TV, and luxuriate. Reynolds, amused and intrigued, takes him on as an apprentice, and they prosper.

This is really all that happens in the course of the film, except that at the end Siemaszko is nabbed on a job while Reynolds gets away. The latter greases the right people so that the young man will be well treated in prison. After visiting him, Reynolds murmurs to himself as he leaves, "Poor kid," while Siemaszko murmurs, "Poor old guy" as he returns to his cell. Reynolds is on his way and rich, and the young man, after his five-year stay, will be on his way and rich, too. What has happened to either of them in the film in character growth or even in cumulative action? Nothing.

The narrative—chronicle, rather—is padded with inserts, such as a poem about testicles that a prostitute reads to Siemaszko in bed. The story is brusquely shunted around by the author. Reynolds warns his apprentice not to make himself conspicuous, yet after the young man gets some money, he buys a Cadillac, goes around to the garage where he once worked to offer his pals a ride, rents an expensive apartment, and puts down the first payment in cash from a thick wad of bills. The fellow who was bright enough to attract Reynolds would have been too bright to do these things. His actions are string-pullings by Sayles to complicate matters.

The author's quick-fizzling brightness is patent in a sequence about a supermarket robbery. The two burglars come down through a hole they have made in the roof and find a huge dog sitting there observing them curiously. Put aside the question of why a watchdog—which presumably it is—makes no sound: Sayles doesn't really use his comic idea. Any professional comedy writer would have made the dog's friendly presence build to a payoff of some kind. Sayles just has the dog pad around after the pair until they leave. It's amateurish.

The ultimate flatness of this film, modestly entertaining though it is throughout, wouldn't matter much if it had not been directed by Bill Forsyth. This is the first time that Forsyth has directed someone else's script. Up to now the scripts have either been his own—in such endearing films as *Gregory's Girl* and *Comfort and Joy*, which were set in his native Scotland—or his own adaptation—his superb film of Marilynne Robinson's superb novel, *Housekeeping*, set in America.

Forsyth's chief success is with Reynolds. The star is not much different here, but he's himself even more fully, at complete and engaging ease. His toupee is slightly grayed, he walks with a limp that is never explained. (This is a good touch. The film lets us assume it's the result of some misadventure on a job.) Aging becomes Reynolds: it underscores his poise, his nonchalance about stardom.

The young actor is a mistake—Forsyth's or someone's. Siemaszko has the features of an oyster and not much more talent. The best that can be said about him is that he is generic. He validly rep-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Do the Right Thing. *Spike Lee's excellently made account of a quiet day on a black Brooklyn street and the violent evening that follows. Very troubling: but mostly in beneficial ways. (Reviewed 7/3/89)* **High Fidelity.** *A gem. Allan Miller's delightful, almost soul-healing documentary about the lives of the members of the Guarneri Quartet. It makes you feel good when you see it, and then you feel good whenever you think about it. (9/18&25/89)* **sex, lies, and videotape.** *Steven Soderbergh's delicate, almost metaphysical exploration of the ambience of sex surrounding four young people in Baton Rouge. A fine achievement. (9/4/89)* **When Harry Met Sally . . . .** *Manhattan dating, highly amusing. Claims to investigate whether a man and a woman can be friends. But the old songs on the sound track and its chorus of older folks make it a comic contrast between the days of willing commitment and today. (8/21/89)* **—SK**

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resents the age and status that are said to be his.

I hope that in the future Forsyth makes films only from his own screenplays. Here or in Scotland.

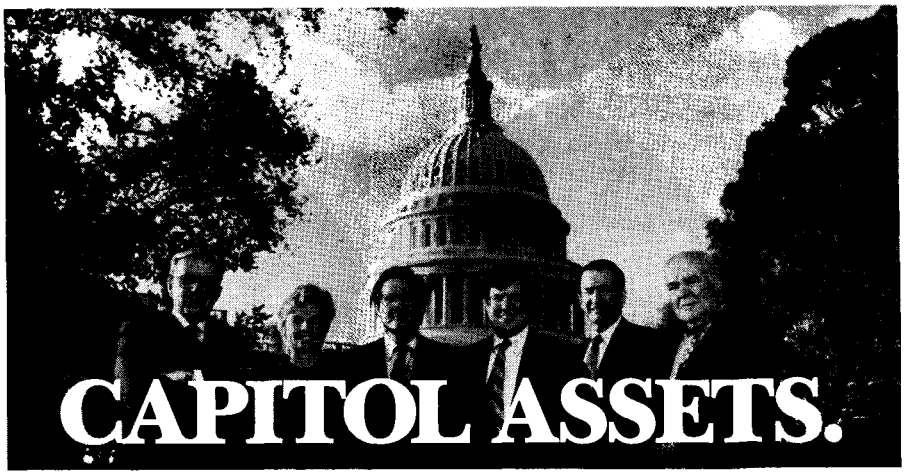
On September 19 the Library of Congress issued a list of 25 American films that, under the National Film Preservation Act passed last year, will be entered in the National Film Registry as "culturally, historically or esthetically significant" and are therefore not to be altered by any distributor or exhibitor. Next year 25 more films will be added to the registry, and in 1991 there'll be another 25.

Films were nominated by the National Film Preservation Board, made up of representatives of various film organizations and of individuals in the film world. The board passed its list of nominees to James H. Billington, the librarian of Congress. Billington, better known as a scholar of Russian history than as a film expert, dropped some choices and added some of his own. (After all that winnowing by film people.) Billington's changes, which he was empowered to make, were not disclosed.

I'm not about to quarrel with the list. No one with an interest in the subject could be completely satisfied with anyone else's list. I note only a few points. A pleasant surprise: Wilder's *Some Like It Hot*, which, most seriously speaking, I consider a great film, is included. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, generally held to be the first American film masterpiece, is understandably omitted: its blatant racism would be a running sore on such a nationally approved list. Griffith's *Intolerance* is present—I hope in the reconstituted form recently shown at the New York Film Festival. The inclusion of Gordon Parks's *The Learning Tree*—a black subject by a black director—seems patronizing tokenism. Parks doesn't belong in this company. (It's too early for Spike Lee: a film must be at least ten years old before it can be registered.)

Congress passed the act in response to the outcry against the colorization of black-and-white films for TV. I couldn't get exercised about this issue for two reasons. First, as many have pointed out, color can be eliminated with a twist of the dial. Second, long before colorization, I tried to get some directors to protest the editing of their films for TV, as well as the mangling of 16mm prints that students see. No action whatsoever. Colorization is barbarous, but why is it worse than cutting and re-editing?

The act itself is virtually toothless. It doesn't flatly protect those 25 films from assault. It merely says that if you unauthorizedly tamper with any of the 25, you have to put a notice on the print stipulating this fact. This reminds me of the Ca-



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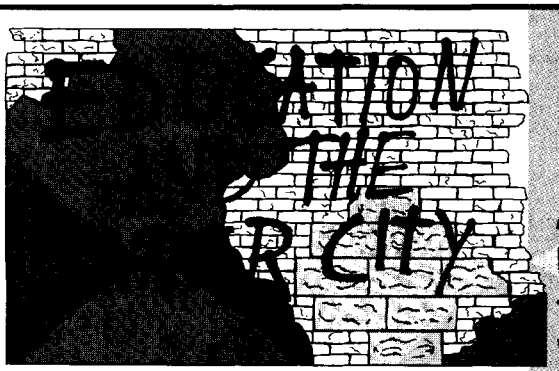

The American dream starts with education, but today the miserable state of inner-city schools is denying young people access to that dream. This Cato Institute conference will look at reform alternatives, including school-choice plans. Speakers will include **Robert Peterkin,** Milwaukee school superintendent; **Lawrence C. Patrick, Jr.,** president of the Detroit Board of Education; **Seymour Fliegel,** formerly of the East Harlem schools; **Lynne V. Cheney,** chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities; **Joan Davis Ratteray,** president of the Institute for Independent Education; **John E. Chubb** of the Brookings Institution; and **John E. Coons** of the University of California-Berkeley.

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ribbean minister of finance years ago who was absconding with a suitcase full of cash. His clerk was worried about so much money leaving the office, so the minister cheerfully signed a receipt for the cash before he flew off to Switzerland. The malefactor's acknowledgment licenses the malfeasance.

The report of the Film Registry in the *New York Times* contained a too-accurate sentence: "The list is a compromise designed to maintain the artistic integrity of films." Mencken, thou shouldst be living at this hour—to savor that sentence.

The many bosses of Soviet literature.

The Two Perestroikas

BY DONALD FANGER

I.

Soviet literature, as distinct from literature of the Soviet period, came into being exactly 15 years after the revolution, the result of an initial *perestroika*, which the current one is now attempting to overhaul, if not undo.

The decade preceding the birth of Soviet literature in 1932 was one of relative, if diminishing, freedom. Throughout the 1920s a kind of civil war, currently being replayed in the Soviet press, was fought between a view of art as essentially political and a view that saw art as a fundamentally autonomous activity (and institution). The Formalist critics, who maintained that art liberates itself from the writer's original intention as from his biographical self, insisted on the latter view, as did the Serapion Brothers, a group of young writers who declared that art is as real as life and, like life, "has neither a goal nor a meaning: it exists because it can't help existing."

Their mentor, Evgenii Zamyatin, had been a Bolshevik in the early years of the century. Now, wary of all establishments, he argued forcefully for the artist's role as heretic, and, in the artist's own sphere, as permanent revolutionary. But by 1931 Zamyatin had been hounded from office as head of the Leningrad branch of the All-Russian Writers' Union and was requesting permission to leave the country, with the right to return "as soon as there is at least a partial change in the prevailing view concerning the role of the literary artist"; and the Formalist enterprise found itself arrested in midcareer.

Those who support an apolitical position are always at a disadvantage against believers. Where they see opponents, the latter see enemies. Already in 1928, one S. Ingulov, head of Glavlit, the censorship office that had been formally established in 1922, wrote in favor of "A Criticism That Does not Deny, but Affirms," declaring:

> Criticism should have consequences: arrests, trials, severe sentences, physical and moral firing squads. . . . Criticism in the Soviet press is not banter, is not a gloating philistine giggle, but the rough and heavy hand of a class which, descending on the back of the enemy, crushes his backbone and splinters his shoulder blades. . . . "Finish him off"—that is the call that sounds in all the speeches of the leaders of the Soviet state."

Two years later, in a book titled *Against Bourgeois Liberalism in Literature*, a critic named Judah Grossman-Roshchin argued that even Mozart was obsolete (and that Pushkin had meant to suggest this in his play about the poisoning of the carefree genius Mozart by the talented but pedestrian Salieri):

> Yes, [Pushkin] poses the problem of the historical sterility of pure art. Mozart is unmasked. Mozart in the historical sense is only a fact, but not a historical factor. Mozart historically is already a corpse. History has already pronounced the death sentence. Here [in Pushkin's play] genius and murder are compatible—for to kill Mozart is only to help history. So—"Off with you! The sooner the better!"

Finally, in 1932, the Party moved to end the contention. A laconic resolution of the Central Committee dissolved the zealously sectarian Association of Proletarian Writers, which had been pressing for its own hegemony, and announced that "all writers who support the platform of Soviet power and who seek to participate in socialist construction" would be united in a single Union of Soviet Writers. The resolution was titled "On the Restructuring (*perestroika*) of Literary-Artistic Organizations." Leonid Leonov, a leading young novelist, wrote at the time of "a restructuring (*perestroika*) of the ranks so as to facilitate the creation of a great literature worthy of the great deeds taking place in the country" under the first five-year plan.

The greatness of those deeds was not to be questioned. According to the Union charter, it underlay "the new creative principles of Soviet literature," which found "their chief expression in the principles of socialist realism"—a portentous phrase that came into being simultaneously with the Union. The charter went on to declare that

> Socialist realism, which is the fundamental method of Soviet literature and literary criticism, demands of the artist a truthful, historically concrete depiction of reality in its revolutionary development. At the same time the truthfulness and historical concreteness of the artistic depiction of reality should be combined with the task of changing the thinking of the workers and educating them in the spirit of socialism.

Introducing the charter at the first Congress of Writers in 1934, Pavel Yudin cited "the whole history of world literature . . . and of the class struggle" as evidence that "literature is and always has been a class phenomenon in its social significance. . . . Let the writers of the whole world know that Soviet writers do not conceal their views; they do not try to hide behind the fig leaves of an art above class and above party mindedness. . . . Socialist realism is the principled opposite of contemporary bourgeois realism."

Particularly representative of this first *perestroika* was Yurii Olesha, a writer who claimed with justice to have been "created by the October Revolution." Olesha's extraordinary novel *Envy*, which appeared in 1927, was built paradigmatically on the conflict between "the old world" and "the new," expressed in a mix of caricature, fantasy, and lyricism that breathes anxiety. It presents a pair of middle-aged brothers and a pair of younger men; in each pair, one belongs to the Soviet future, one to the rubbish heap of history. Yet it is the misfits to whom Olesha assigns freshness of vision, imagination, and complexity of feeling. Each dreams up a fantastic protest against the future that is excluding him. Here is one of them, confessing to the secret police:

> The new man is schooling himself to scorn the old feelings glorified by the poets, by the muse of history herself. Well, there we are. I want to organize a final parade of those feelings . . . the last parade of the ancient, human passions. . . . Through the

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slits of her mask, history will follow us with a twinkling eye. I want to point them out to her: here is a lover, here an ambitious man, here a traitor; this one is recklessly brave, this is a true friend, this a prodigal son. Here they are, the bearers of great feelings now found insignificant and vulgar. For one last time before they vanish, before they are exposed to mockery, let them be seen at a climactic moment.

The year after *Envy*, Olesha published a quasi-autobiographical sketch called "Human Material," which makes plain the violent self-division he was seeking to stifle. It ends:

> I seize myself within myself, seize by the throat that *I* who suddenly wants to turn and extend his arms toward the past.
>
> The *I* who thinks that the distance between us and Europe is only a geographical one.
>
> The *I* who views everything that happens only in relation to his own single and unrepeatable life. . . .
>
> I want to crush in myself the second, third, and all the selves that come crawling out of the past.
>
> I want to destroy the petty feelings in me.
>
> If I can't be an engineer of the elements, I can still be an engineer of human material.
>
> Does that sound pretentious? Let it. I shout out loud: "Long live the reconstruction of human material, the all-embracing engineering of a new world!"

Olesha said he wanted "to depict man for the first time becoming Man." So in 1932, when all writers were herded together into a single Union of Soviet Writers, he published a piece called "The Necessity of a Restructuring [*perestroika*] is Clear to Me," about his conviction that "a shining future is in the offing." Two years later, at the first Congress of Soviet Writers, his reaffirmation of these views brought stormy applause.

It was often assumed in the West that such statements must be extortions, that they were meant to be taken ironically. On this assumption, Olesha's virtual disappearance from literature after 1930 tended to be read as a sign that he was a straightforward victim of the political pressures of triumphant Stalinism. Even Nabokov, usually so careful in matters of fact, assumed that a writer like Olesha must have perished in the camps, and reported that assumption as fact.

What the record indicates, however, is that Olesha was never arrested, that he expired as a writer long before he drank himself to death in 1960. It was not so much obsolete emotional or artistic allegiances that doomed him, but rather the opposite: his belief that History had made individual views, personal values, the inner life, all obsolete. The "re-

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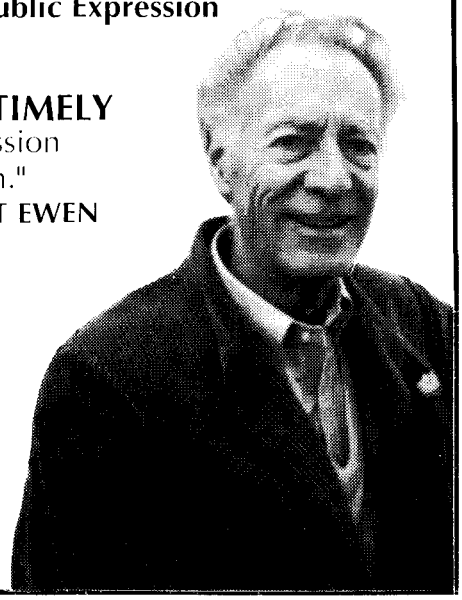

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structured" writer found himself robbed of the ambivalence that had fueled his art.

In an article published two years ago in the Soviet journal *Znamya*, Margarita Aliger recalled a speech that Olesha made in 1936, on the morrow of *Pravda*'s strident attack ("Noise Instead of Music") on Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, which heralded the campaign against "formalism" in the arts. A large audience turned out, she writes, because they trusted Olesha and were curious about the position he would take. He began by confessing his love for Shostakovich and his music, described his initial distress at the attack, but went on to voice his ultimate realization that his "whole complex picture of life" would collapse if he failed to agree with the Party "on any point": "And so I agree and say that in this area of art, too—as in everything—the Party is right." Aliger concludes that the confession was sincere, and that it broke him as a writer.

II.

The second *perestroika* of Soviet literature is on the way to repealing the first. How completely is still unclear; initiated from above, it can be halted from above. But it has already gone further than anyone could have imagined even three or four years ago, and it has rendered obsolete many of the premises and the practices of the earlier restructuring. As Marietta Chudakova, one of the most perceptive and outspoken scholars in Moscow, wrote recently:

> The main sensation you have about everything that has been going on for the past year and a half or two is the sensation of the end of one historical period and the beginning of another. Whatever may await us in the future, a line has been drawn under the past. Things will not be as they used to be, let skeptics say what they will. What may be most important of all is not to lose sight of the possibility opening before us of forming a new view of things.

To put it another way, what we are now seeing is the replacement of History by history, by a record in which no names and only a few facts remain unmentionable. The old euphemisms are being discarded in favor of circumstantial detail. Censorship has atrophied, if not disappeared. 7,900 of the 8,000 books formerly guarded in the special collections of Soviet libraries, unavailable to ordinary users, have been moved to the open collections. The censorship itself, once unmentionable, is openly discussed in print. Last December a member of the board of Glavlit, one Vladimir Alekseevich Solodin, submitted to a frank (and only slightly surrealistic) interview with a Dutch journalist, in which he described the workings of his office and confessed his personal satisfaction at being able to become acquainted with books he might otherwise not have been able to see.

Works long banned as "anti-Soviet" have been pouring off the presses, among them Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*; Vasily Grossman's *Life and Fate*; Zamiatin's *We*; Andrei Platonov's brilliant and pessimistic *Chevengur* and *The Foundation Pit*; Varlaam Shalamov's terse and harrowing *Kolyma Tales*; Lydia Chukovskaia's novels, *Sofia Petrovna* and *Going Under*; Anna Akhmatova's *Requiem*; the first volume of Nadezhda Mandelstam's memoirs; works by Nabokov, by the poet Vladislav Khodasevich and other émigrés of the 1920s, as well as by more recent émigrés, among them Joseph Brodsky, Vladimir Voinovich, and Georgii Vladimov; prerevolutionary writers such as the philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev and the corrosive and unclassifiable Vasilii Rozanov; and foreign works like Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, Orwell's *1984* and *Animal Farm*, Robert Conquest's *The Great Terror*, and Stephen F. Cohen's *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution*.

The ongoing debate over the proper function of literature and literary criticism is enough to make a longtime reader of the Soviet press rub his eyes. Gone is the obligatory pretense to superiority, or even to radical otherness. Sergei Chuprinin writes in the March 1989 issue of *Literaturnoe obozrenie*, the official journal of the Writers' Union:

> For so long we Russians have based our hope on our "specialness," on the originality of our historical path and nature (at first religious, then governmental, then ideological, and finally ethnic)—and we've gotten so many lumps and black eyes thanks to those hopes—that it may well be time to stop, time to seek in ourselves, our soul, and our culture not what sets us apart from the rest of the world, but rather what is common to all human beings no matter where they were born or where they find themselves living, whether in Moscow or Osaka, in Velsk or Chicago. I am convinced that our historical task is not to hold up . . . Russia to the world (we've had our fill of doing that), but to try, while it's still not too late, to rejoin the world community, to share its burdens and joys, and, at last, to accept its laws, which apply to all humanity.

Public discussion is astonishingly free and direct: the old sacramental phrases have been dropped in favor of hitherto unimaginable ones like "spiritual values," "universal human truths," "the image and likeness of God" (with a capital letter!), "normal life."

This reincorporation of ampler vocabularies and frameworks for understanding is perhaps the most striking feature of the current literary-cultural scene. One small but significant example is a notice, published this spring, of Venedikt Erofeev's hilarious, sordid, powerful, grotesque mini-epic of alcoholism and alienation, *Moscow-Petushki* (*Moscow to the End of the Line*, in one of its two pale English translations). A samizdat masterpiece from the 1960s, now published officially, it has elicited a ground-breaking defense of what used to be dismissed as "sick," "decadent," and "anti-social" writing. The critic Igor Vinogradov traces the genealogy of this work back to Dostoyevsky's *Notes from Underground* (itself a work long slighted in Soviet Russia and to my knowledge printed there only in the three editions of Dostoyevsky's collected works). In Erofeev's repugnant and pitiable narrator he finds the voice "of a crippled humanity, a humanity that is weak and does not know (how could it?) any faith of a sort that might sustain real human independence—the voice of a humanity that is charged therefore with a tragic dependence on the echo returned to it . . . by the very world it rejects . . ."

Vinogradov justifies the desperate and contentless repulsion of this voice as a "flower of evil" in the Baudelairean sense, an "honest" (and representative) cry of alienation, profound and suggestive in its utter rejection of false civic and patriotic pieties, and one that deserves to be met with a corresponding if painful honesty by its readers. Other critics have even argued for the legitimacy of a literature "about nothing." And now one of the chief defenders of such a literature, the paradoxalist "Abram Tertz" (Andrei Sinyavsky, who was forced into emigration in 1973 after serving a seven-year sentence in the camps for "slandering the Soviet state" in his essay "On Socialist Realism" and in his fictions, both published only in the West), is himself on the way to becoming available to readers in his homeland. "On Socialist Realism" has just been announced for publication in a Soviet journal, and there are rumors that some of his other subversive works will follow.

The old teleology, in short, has lost its monopoly, and has been demystified. Last year the journal *Literaturnaya Ucheba*, introducing a long article by Vinogradov, cited "the need for a new, antidogmatic way of thinking [and] the investigation of differing points of view as one

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of the components of *perestroika*." Vinogradov's article itself speaks of "the decades-long illness . . . in fact the fateful, chronic illness of our criticism." In a "normal" society, he writes, social and political problems can be written about directly, leaving literature to be approached in its own terms, from a variety of viewpoints, those held by "not only Marxists but idealists, not only atheists but Catholics and Muslims and Orthodox Christians, not only the adherents of socialist realism but . . . even avant-gardists and modernists":

> [T]he existence in society of spiritual culture in any form other than that of a freely self-defining and dialogical one can be only a parody of cultural life, for culture in its very nature is a matter of dialogue and its life lies only in constant and free self-definition through a free spiritual dialogue of all the forces creating it.

The abandonment of teleology—of that subordination of culture to the grand Purpose that the first *perestroika* proclaimed—will not be easy, as Vinogradov recognizes:

> We absolutely cannot get used to living in normal social conditions—or, at least conditions that aspire to the normal . . .—we cannot *win them back*—by asking what is required of us. We seem unable to comprehend that what is required of us is to live *normally*, and not by the habits and notions of the past; we are still living entirely by inertia, involuntary captives of our old sense of the world. . . .

In the Soviet Union, these notions of "normalcy" and "honesty" are revolutionary. And they have gone so far that another Soviet critic, Igor Zolotussky, could declare early this year, in an article pointedly called "The Collapse of Abstractions," that "the heart of a man can belong to a woman, a friend, a father or mother, but not to the party. You can love your country, a house that holds people you love, but it is impossible to love an organization, be it a party, a trade union, the Council of Ministers, or the U.N."

III.

It may be misleading to cite such pronouncements. They are not the dominant ones; and they are embattled. What one must admire is less their comparative strength—it is hard to measure—than their very existence in public discourse.

A shakedown period, in which texts and facts and vocabularies sort themselves out and are in some measure assimilated, must occur before any assessments of the new *perestroika* can be made. That sorting out will be political. At the moment, it is open season on the evils of

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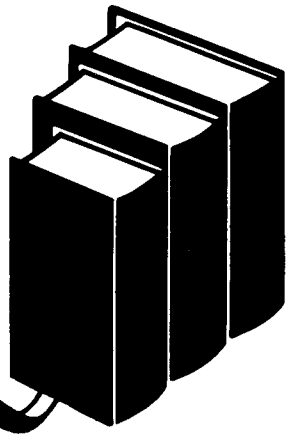

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Stalinism, but these tend to be portrayed as "distortions" of principles still valid in their pristine Leninist form. It is not inevitable that debates like the one in the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* last May titled "Myths of Socialist Realism?" (it continued a debate of last year titled "Should We Reject Socialist Realism?") presage the scrapping of that concept, despite acknowledgments by both disputants of its "dogmas," "myths," and their use "as a repressive instrument of the Stalinist system."

The reason is clear enough. It is stated by Avner Zis, a recently enlightened former defender of the dogmas and myths in question. "If it were not for the current political consciousness affirming the priority of universal human values," he tells his opponent (who would exclude politics from literary and cultural life), "our present conversation could not have taken place . . ." This politely menacing reminder is quite in order. *Glasnost* is not yet freedom of speech. It is only an item of current policy that, now as before, defines the permissible. And current policy is in a state of flux.

What has been going on for the past two or three years in the Soviet Union is, strictly speaking, an unstructuring. The restructuring is still ahead. Nowhere is this more plainly evident than in the schizoid preamble to the revised Draft Statutes of the Union of Soviet Writers ("Aims of the Union of Writers and the Area of its Competence"), published for purposes of discussion in the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* last March. In this bizarre text, which reads like a parody of a committee-written document, cosmetic updatings of the old dogmas coexist with statements of principle that flatly contradict them, revealing the strains and the dilemmas, the hopes and the dangers, of the present unresolved situation.

Two distinct voices alternate in the document, occasionally within a single sentence. The preamble begins with a conservative, unregenerately bureaucratic voice, which defines "the basic aim" of the Union as "the development of a multinational Soviet literature, the raising of its ideational-aesthetic potential." The Union, it explains,

> defends the founding principles of Soviet literature—the principles of the party-minded and national character of artistic creation in their genuinely Leninist understanding; it recognizes the programmatic aims of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and is guided by them in its work, actively participating in the social-political life of the country to carry out the tasks of revolutionary *perestroika*.

(Translation: Soviet literature remains sui generis in its nature, its function, and its organization; it serves the Party as it has since 1932. Normalization and universal human values continue to be hollow and alien bourgeois phrases. We admit that excesses occurred under Stalin and his successors: What more do you need as proof of how decisively things have changed for the better?)

Then the document's other voice (I will put it in italics) enters, speaking in a sharply contrasting style, lapidary and unequivocal: "*The Union considers artistic freedom an indispensable condition of the development of literature.*" That voice goes on for another half-sentence, only to be abruptly supplanted by the first voice, which tacks on a neutralizing non sequitur: "*In its work the Union of Writers is oriented toward pluralism of opinions, breadth of artistic discussions, variety of aesthetic strivings and literary movements*, consistently supporting works that are realistic in their method and socialist in their ideal."

In another paragraph, Voice Two gets almost the whole of the opening sentence before Voice One takes over to change the subject as well as the style once again:

> *The Union supports truthful, talented, artistically and intellectually significant works of literature of all styles and genres, encourages and defends the autonomy and the vitality of artistic language, facilitates the strengthening in literature of the spirit of free artistic searching*, of principled and social activity. The Union seeks to aid in the establishment, both in literature and in life, of all that is new, honest, progressive; it fights against routine and stagnation.

These contradictions pervade the document. In June the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* published 14 responses to the draft charter. Two pronounced it entirely satisfactory, and one expressed distress at the document's failure to re-endorse socialist realism as such. Most of the others, however, pick up on the incongruities. The popular balladeer and novelist Bulat Okudzhava finds "consistent support" for realism at variance with support for pluralism of opinions. M. Kolosov, from Moscow, is untroubled by "realist in method," but suggests, in place of "socialist in ideal," the phrase "socialist in tendency, permeated with advanced ideas, propagating humanism, the struggle for peace, and the survival of humanity."

By far the longest and the most radical response to the proposed new charter for the Union appeared in the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* in August. Titled "The Kind of Union We Need Today" and signed by seven writers, it dismisses the draft out of hand because it retains "the whole conceptual system" of the original charter and because it embodies "outdated notions about managing literature by administrative fiat." The natural organizers of literature, the signatories declare, are the newspapers, the magazines, and the publishing houses, not the Union of Writers. They note that the literary press existed successfully until 1934 without the Union. Does this mean that it is time to disband the Union? Not quite:

> We don't need the Union as it is foisted on us by the charter, as a sort of organ of supreme power over literature and a distributor of material blessings, rewards, and prizes. But we do need it as a regulator and coordinator of our creative life; as a guarantor of the social and legal status of writers, as a genuine defender of copyright . . .

The born-again Union should be "a democratic, self-governing association of writers." Its officials should be elected for strictly limited, nonrenewable terms, and represent a plethora of newly formed "groups and associations" within the Union, each equipped with its own independent newspaper or journal.

Will such a Union be seriously considered, let alone come into being? It is hard to say. There are powerful members and constituencies in the present Union who will not relinquish their perquisites gladly. Threatened by the second *perestroika*, they, like other losers in Gorbachev's reforms, may finally prefer a third *perestroika*, a restructuring more like the first. •

Death And The Young Man

(after Schubert)

"Death, you needn't be afraid,
thin and fevered though I am.
I, who have waited so long
to see you, will not struggle
now that you've arrived. Just be
gentle. This is my first time."

"Yes, I was frightened. Though I
have taken many ravaged
by Time and Cruelty, yet
not until now, one like you
so beautiful and ready.
Let me hold you in my arms."

DAVID BERGMAN

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The deep and ugly thought of Georges Bataille.

The Attraction of Repulsion

BY ALEXANDER NEHAMAS

How do you classify a writer like Georges Bataille? Novelist, poet, essayist, economist, philosopher, mystic? The answer is so difficult that the literary manuals generally prefer to forget about Bataille, who, in fact, wrote texts, perhaps continuously one single text.

So wrote Roland Barthes, struck by the stunning diversity of George Bataille's literary output. Bataille's writing, in all its mysterious variety, has been as repulsive to some as it has been important to others. Until recently, he was familiar to English readers mainly as the author of some highly sophisticated pornographic novels, particularly of *Story of the Eye* (1928), which appeared in English in 1977. In France, however, he has long been revered as an original thinker and a broad-ranging writer; his collected works were published posthumously by Gallimard in ten massive volumes. Now Bataille's theoretical writings are flooding the American intellectual scene. Why the sudden interest? What about his personality, his influence, or his writing explains the immense urgency with which his work is currently received here?

One reason for Bataille's new popularity in America is that post-structuralism is gradually becoming less an object of love or hatred and more a field of study, and so its intellectual history is becoming a subject of interest. Foucault has written that Bataille's "reflective texts and novels" aim at nothing less than "the shattering of the philosophical subject." Barthes, Foucault, Derrida, and Kristeva all acknowledge their debt to him. Another reason is the growing importance, in the universe of American philosophy, of Nietzsche. More than any single author, it was Bataille who, constantly analyzing and appealing to Nietzsche's ideas, exposed once and for all the fundamental unsoundness of the Nazi claim to Nietzsche, in his article "Nietzsche and the Fascists," which appeared in 1935, during the period of the Nationalist Socialists' most extreme exploitation of Nietzsche's thought. (It is reprinted in *Visions of Excess*.)

ALEXANDER NEHAMAS is Carpenter Professor of the Humanities at Princeton University.

Georges Bataille (1897-1962) was a medievalist by training. He worked as an archivist at the Bibliothèque Nationale from 1922 until 1942. But his tame, isolated job did not prevent him from becoming a central and controversial figure in the seething intellectual milieu of Paris between the wars. His friendship with Michel Leiris, which produced some profound parallels in their writing, led to his introduction to the surrealist circle of André Breton. It was not long before Bataille and Breton came to detest each other thoroughly. Bataille concluded that Breton had led surrealism into the art market, where it joined the society that it was designed to undermine and preserved the idealism it had been intended to expose. Breton, for his part, found Bataille's growing belief that ugliness and violence are essential to society simply disgusting; in the Second Surrealist Manifesto, he denounced Bataille, among other things, as an "excremental philosopher."

The Accursed Share (vol. 1)
by Georges Bataille
translated by Robert Hurley
(Zone Books, 197 pp., $20.95)

Guilty
by Georges Bataille
translated by Bruce Boone
(Lapis Press, 161 pp., $11.95)

Inner Experience
by Georges Bataille
translated by Leslie Anne Boldt
(State University of New York Press, 209 pp., $34.50, $10.95 paper)

Theory of Religion
by Georges Bataille
translated by Robert Hurley
(Zone Books, 126 pp., $17.95)

Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939
by Georges Bataille
edited by Allan Stoekl
translated by Allan Stoekl, with Carl R. Lovitt and Donald M. Leslie Jr.
(University of Minnesota Press, 271 pp., $14.95)

The College of Sociology (1937-39)
edited by Denis Hollier
translated by Betsy Wing
(University of Minnesota Press, 458 pp., $45, $19.95 paper)

Having abandoned surrealism, Bataille turned to the publication of a series of influential journals, and to the formation of various groups and societies. He kept up with his novels, with their mixture of eroticism and surrealism, but he became concerned largely with anthropology, with Nietzsche, with Marxism and Hegelianism, with religion and mysticism, all of which he combined into one of the most peculiar and idiosyncratic philosophies of his time.

Of all the groups that Bataille organized, the most interesting and the most important was the short-lived College of Sociology (1937-39). The group met roughly every other week in the back room of a Left Bank bookstore, to listen to talks by Bataille, Leiris, Roger Caillois, Alexandre Kojève, and others. The meetings were also attended, at various times, by Walter Benjamin, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Jean-Paul Sartre. The influence of this informal but strict institution was enormous. It is possible to see the traces of the College as much on structuralist anthropology's turn away from the study of particular human beings as on existentialism's passionately intense commitment to the lone individual.

The texts of these lectures are now marvelously presented in Denis Hollier's exemplary edition. Their range is enormous. They address matters of philosophy, religion, sociology, aesthetics, and anthropology. They have a common theme, which is the articulation of a concept of society in which the individual, as understood by Enlightenment rationalism, would no longer be fundamental. Human beings, according to the intellectuals of the College, were not the originators of society, as the theories of the social contract suppose, but its products; common bonds precede the independent individual.

It might be too simple, but it is not totally inaccurate, to begin by characterizing Bataille as a religious man who had no faith in God, as a mystic who could never find an object for his experiences. He was, like many of his contemporaries, profoundly alienated from the Enlightenment, from its emphasis on reason, production, and utility; but he was also integrally allied to the Enlightenment in his denial of the existence of God, of any power or limit outside the human.

Like other similar-minded critics, Bataille attacks the Enlightenment for its narrow conception of reason, according to which the rational is identified with

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the most efficient means for producing a given end, whose own utility is itself a function of its effectiveness in bringing about a further end. Heidegger identified this conception with technology, Adorno and Horkheimer with what they called instrumental reason. Bataille often refers to it as economic rationality, as productive or "restricted" economy. In such an economy, according to Bataille, the purpose of all activity has been relegated to something beyond that activity itself, to an end to which the activity is subordinate and from which it is distinct: "'Action' is utterly dependent upon project. . . . Project . . . is the putting off of existence to a later point," Bataille writes in *Inner Experience* (1943), the first volume of his *summa atheologica*, and his first effort to give a systematic exposition of his philosophical views.

In *The Accursed Share* (1949), his major theoretical work, in which he presents in detail his notion of profitless consumption, Bataille attributes to "the introduction of labor into the world" a replacement of

> intimacy, the depth of desire and its free outbreaks, with rational progression, where what matters is no longer the truth of the present moment, but, rather, the subsequent results of *operations*. The first labor established the world of *things*. . . . Once the world of things was posited, man himself became one of the things of this world, at least for the time in which he labored.

But Bataille believes that traces of this earlier time still remain: "It is this degradation that man has always tried to escape. In his strange myths, in his cruel rites, man is *in search of a lost intimacy* from the first."

It is at this point that Bataille brings together the anthropological, the economic, and the religious elements of his thought—as well as the pornographic ones. Under the impact of Durkheim's distinction between the sacred and the profane, and of Marcel Mauss's famous essay on gift-giving, Bataille tried to produce an alternative to the profane, acquisitive, productive, and "homogeneous" world of which, according to him, modernity dreams.

His alternative was articulated in many ways. On a religious level, Bataille introduced his notion of "inner experience," which he explicitly connects with "that which one usually calls mystical experience: the states of ecstasy, of rapture" and which he contrasts with ordinary, productive activity because it "cannot have any other concern nor any other goal than itself. . . . It is the opposite of action. Nothing more." Freed from "the presuppositions to which the mystics imagine it to be linked," that is, from faith in the existence of God, freed from the desire for union with Him, inner experience was connected for Bataille with "eroticism and laughter." And this connection is at least partly explained by his view that

> so-called unproductive expenditures: luxury, mourning, war, cults, the construction of sumptuous monuments, games, spectacles, arts, perverse sexual activity (i.e., deflected from genital [reproductive] finality)—all these represent activities which, at least in primitive circumstances, have no end beyond themselves.

We must not be misled by the qualification "inner" into thinking that Bataille's notion of experience as an end in itself is a private, incommunicable event. On the contrary (here his disagreement with Sartre's individualism—encapsulated in the latter's famous line, "Hell . . . is the others"—becomes patent), "There is no meaning for a lone individual. . . . If I wish my life to have meaning for me, it is necessary that it have meaning *for others*. . . . I cannot for a moment . . . make a distinction between myself and those with whom I desire to communicate."

"Inner experience" produces what Bataille calls "ecstasy." In *Guilty* (1944), the second volume of the *summa*, a complex aphoristic work written in a confessional, almost oracular style, he writes that inner experience "is the absence of an outside answer." He is, again, a mystic whose experience had no object. The absence of an outside answer is the realization that nothing can give a life meaning or purpose that is not a product of that life itself; and the further realization that life cannot produce anything *but* itself. There are no transcendent standards or ends: Bataille never tires of repeating Nietzsche's slogan that God is dead. He insists, in a manner that is often far from clear, that ecstasy is "*communication* between terms" and "possesses a value the terms did not have: it annihilates them. Similarly, the light of a star (slowly) annihilates the star itself." We can detect in this view the insolence of the College of Sociology. Social bonds are never accidental; they are, instead, part of even the most individual and private experiences.

The image of a star consuming itself in an illumination that has no further purpose brings us to Bataille's economic views. Here "economics" must be taken in a broad sense indeed. In *The Accursed Share*, which he always considered his major work, Bataille contrasts the notion of a "general" economy to that of a "restricted" economy. The latter, he writes, acknowledges only the creation of wealth. For general economy, however, "the 'expenditure' (the 'consumption') of wealth, rather than production, [is] the primary object." Solar energy, Bataille believes, is the source of life's "exuberant" development, and "the sun gives without ever receiving." It is a dubious proposition that abstracts from the position of the solar system in the universe as a whole, but it conveys the odd and fecund flavor of Bataille's theory. Similarly, he claims, the world in general contains an excess of energy and this, "which constitutes wealth, must ultimately be spent lavishly (without return)." From the point of view of general economy, "a series of profitable operations have absolutely no other effect than the squandering of profit."

Thus Bataille attacks a fundamental premise of modern economics, namely, the idea that the purpose of economic production is the reinvestment of capital for the creation of further resources. By contrast, he argues that the ultimate object of production is gratuitous expenditure, squander, the destruction of wealth: "The meaning of . . . freedom is given in destruction, whose essence is to consume *profitlessly* whatever might remain in the progression of useful works." With the nostalgia characteristic of many critics of modernity, who see our time as a seamless web to be abandoned all at once for a fundamentally different structure (the nature of which, of course, varies radically from one critic to another), Bataille perceives traces of such squandering even during the Middle Ages: "The construction of a church is not a profitable use of the available labor, but rather its consumption, the destruction of its utility."

There is a serious problem here, of which Bataille was not unaware, but to which he never offered a satisfactory solution. Even if we assume that such expenditure does not produce profit in the usual sense, the "usual sense" in question is that specified by restricted economy: economic advantage. But from the point of view of general economy, there is no reason to think of profit in such narrow terms. The giver, Bataille writes, "enriches himself with a contempt for riches, and what he proves to be miserly of is in fact his generosity."

Bataille makes this point in connection with potlatch, a practice of the Indians of the American Northwest. Potlatch consists in the ostentatious giving of gifts to an opponent, or even in the destruction of considerable wealth (including living slaves), as a challenge to that opponent, who incurs an obligation to do better. The ideal of potlatch is a gift so large that it cannot be returned. But Bataille is

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aware that rank and power are the concomitants of this practice; and it is not at all clear that these are not, from a "general" point of view, equivalent to profit. If they are the equivalent of profit, need and necessity remain primary forces in human behavior, Bataille's denials notwithstanding.

Bataille's discussion of potlatch, along with his extensive meditations on sacrificial practices, especially those of the Aztecs, constitutes the lion's share of the anthropological part of his work. Bataille's field experience as an anthropologist makes Lévi-Strauss, who also was not particularly fond of the field, seem like a hard-core empiricist. Bataille was *never* in the field. Still, his speculations are immensely suggestive.

All the Aztecs' important undertakings, he believed, were useless: "Consumption loomed just as large in their thinking as production does in ours. They were just as concerned about *sacrificing* as we are about *working*." Sacrifice, he claims in *Theory of Religion*, in which he pursues further the ideas expressed in *The Accursed Share*, is generally "the antithesis of production, which is accomplished with a view to the future; it is consumption that is concerned only with the moment . . . the offering is rescued from all utility." Sacrifice therefore looks like the institutional counterpart of inner experience and ecstasy, which also are concerned only with the present in total disregard of utility.

Rather sentimentally, Bataille contrasts animals with human beings. "Animality is immediacy or immanence," he writes in *Theory of Religion*: "What is given when one animal eats another is always *the fellow creature* of the one that eats. . . . There is no relation of *subordination* like that connecting an object, a thing, to man, who refuses to be viewed as a thing." The notion of the "object," the "thing," comes into existence only with the invention of the *tool*, which is absolutely necessary for human survival, and which

> directly establishes its utility, its subordination to the one who uses it with an end in view, and its subordination to this end. . . . Unfortunately the end is thus given in terms of the means, in terms of utility.

Utility thus destroys the original sense of unity, continuity, immanence, or "intimacy" (which is present, for Bataille, even during the tearing apart of one animal by another). It makes everything in the world, the user as well as the tool, a mere thing, defined purely by the end it serves. "The farmer is not a man: he is the plow of the one who eats the bread." But remnants of intimacy and continuity, of the sense that all things are of the

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same kind, are still present, Bataille speculates, in human life. These remnants are part of what he calls the sacred, which is one of the most fundamental categories of his thought:

> Continuity, which for the animal could not be distinguished from anything else, which was in it and for it the only possible mode of being, offered man all the fascination of the sacred world, as against the poverty of the profane tool (of the discontinuous object).

The sacred, in turn, is connected with sacrifice, which Bataille understands as pure non-productive consumption and squander, concerned only with the moment. In light of the Homeric poems, which regularly construe sacrifice as a profoundly calculated affair, one may have some doubts about Bataille's view; but he claims to be speculating about prehistory. In any case, concern for the moment and a disdain for utility remove "the plant and the animal, together with the farmer and the stock raiser from the world of things." In particular, Bataille concludes, "human sacrifice ... is the most radical contestation of the primacy of utility." Sacrifice makes sacred.

The sacred and the sacrifice, which for Bataille appear in present society only as "survivals" or remnants, possess another crucial characteristic: they are at once objects of attraction and of repulsion. Along these lines, in two lectures in *The College of Sociology*, Bataille offers an interpretation of the Christian church, a repository of dead bodies as well as a locus of a symbolic sacrifice. People attend church, attracted by its communal powers, but also with a certain sense of repulsion, "an interior silence keeping the noise of life at a distance." Most important, "the gesture required of the faithful at the moment in which the sacrifice is accomplished is one of guilty anguish. The priest's elevation of the sacred object requires heads to be lowered."

This double aspect of the sacred brings us to Bataille's notion of sacred sociology, discussed in *The College of Sociology*. "Sacred sociology [is] the study not only of religious institutions but of the entire communifying movement of society. ... It contemplates all human activities—sciences, arts, and technologies—insofar as they have a communifying value ... insofar as they are the *creators* of unity." What is it that, originally, brings human beings together into groups? Bataille's answer is unequivocal. It is a set of objects, places, or practices that have a sacred character, and which, by belonging to one group and not to another, create such groups in the first place, and define the nature of the human beings that belong to them.

But the character of the sacred is not itself unequivocal. On the contrary:

> The social nucleus is, in fact, taboo ... untouchable and unspeakable; from the outset it partakes of the nature of corpses, menstrual blood, pariahs. ... Early human beings were brought together by disgust and by common terror, by an insurmountable horror focused precisely on what originally was the central attraction to their union.

What brings us together, in short, is what disgusts us. This idea is perverse, unflattering, unsupported, but profoundly evocative. Perhaps the natty pedestrian's glance averted from the homeless bag lady is not an inappropriate illustration.

Contemporary society, according to Bataille, denies the repulsive aspects of the sacred, which are responsible for the very origin of culture. In accordance with economic rationality, it also denies the necessity of profitless expenditure and "in the last analysis denies its criminal origin," the fact that, like all societies, it has been founded on prohibition, on exclusion, on violence. To remind his readers of "the duality of sacred forms," Bataille devotes a large part of his literary and discursive talent to a description of our continuing fascination with disgusting objects, including excrement, madness, violent death, and unspeakably perverse sexuality.

Bataille contrasts such objects to the useful elements of society, which he calls "homogeneous" in that they can all be measured in terms of a common factor: money. But these other, "heterogeneous" elements (of which the sacred is one kind) are objects that rational society cannot openly accommodate. They have no official place in it, and their presence threatens the stability of the world as we see it. Socially as well as personally, they provoke aversion through the very attraction they exercise. At times, in fact, it seems that Bataille's theoretical works can be read as pornographic novels whose characters are no longer individual persons, but society and the world as a whole. Social groups and ecological systems engage, like stars, in the violent, useless, unproductive behavior to which his individual fictional heroes are devoted.

Reason, then, is not for Bataille the unified, independent faculty we commonly take it to be. The rational is, rather, the product of the denial of the dangerous alternatives to reason, of a repression of their fascination and attraction. This, I believe, is what Foucault had in mind when he praised Bataille for the "shattering of the philosophical subject," the subject conceived, following Descartes and the rationalist tradition, as self-sufficient, perfectly self-aware, and dependent upon no external factors for its central characteristics. "Madness itself," Bataille writes, "gives a rarefied idea of the free 'subject,' unsubordinated to the 'real' order and occupied only with the present." What counts as reason is what is left once these other elements are forcibly excluded.

Bataille asks why classical economy should have supposed that, originally, the practice of exchange aimed to satisfy a need to acquire, and not the contrary need to lose or to squander. His own view is that the latter is more basic, that it corresponds to a great ecological principle. Accordingly, he writes in *The Accursed Share*, squandering is inevitable—which is to say, in all social organizations, there will be victims. Once chosen, the victim becomes "the accursed share, destined for violent consumption."

Such consumption, however, has become progressively more problematic in modernity. Bataille accepts and extends Weber's analysis of the relationship between Protestantism and capitalism. His view is that the medieval economy still displayed a non-productive consumption of its excess wealth, especially in its construction of sacred monuments. But this consumption was unstable because, to a great extent, engaging in good deeds aimed at the soul's salvation: salvation could therefore appear as the productive end of those good deeds, and place them, too, within the realm of "profane things."

According to Bataille, Luther "did not so much object to luxury itself as to the possibility of gaining heaven by making an extravagant use of individual wealth." Calvin, in turn, carried Luther's principles to their extreme logical conclusion and established an unbridgeable gap between deeds and salvation: "Grace alone brings about an accord with divinity." In this way, wealth was relegated to purely productive use, to the production of further wealth and nothing more, and human beings were relegated to "gloriless activity." In this manner, modernity completely destroyed the sacred world of non-productive consumption. Modernity "handed the earth over to the men of production, to the bourgeois."

If wealth can no longer be squandered in a glorious and exalted manner, however, it will be expended in catastrophic ways: in the violent wars, massacres, and imperialist ventures that, for wholesale critics of modernity, are the inescapable outcome of economic, instrumental, or technological reason. These, Bataille seems to believe, may someday be themselves sufficient to bring down our civili-

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zation. For, by outlawing the acceptable violence involved in everything sacred, our civilization produced the drab lives to which most people are condemned, and the violence that remains officially unacceptable to economic and "profane" rationality. Economic rationality, in sum, may ultimately collapse of its own weight.

Much of what Bataille writes is profound and scintillating. His prose is always elegant, even at its most abstract and theoretical. His combination of surrealist imagery, aestheticism, and fin-de-siècle decadence gives his work an earthliness rarely found in authors addressing the subjects that concern him. In some ways, his closest companions are a mystical poet like St. John of the Cross or a (heterogeneous) painter like Hieronymus Bosch. The extraordinarily imaginative and adventurous Bataille repays reading—but only if the reading is skeptical.

For Bataille's views are, finally, too obscure and speculative. The latter point, in fact, was what prompted Leiris's serious doubts about the College of Sociology in 1939. "In the end, we have to choose," he wrote Bataille:

> and if we take sociological science as it has been established by men like Durkheim, Mauss, and Robert Hertz as our reference, it is essential to stick to their methods. Otherwise . . . we have to stop calling ourselves "sociologists."

A more serious objection to Bataille concerns his intellectual relationship to fascism. Despite his personal opposition to it, there are elements in his thought that bring him philosophically close to it. In a famous article on "The Psychological Structure of Fascism" (it is given in *Visions of Excess*), he sees clearly that his account of heterogeneity, which involves force, lack of productivity, attraction/repulsion, violence and excess, the primitive—what, in a word, he calls "the incommensurate"—implies that

> the fascist leaders are incontestably part of heterogeneous existence. Opposed to democratic politicians, who represent in different countries the platitude inherent in *homogeneous* society, Mussolini and Hitler immediately stand out as something *other*.

"Heterogeneous," "other": in Bataille's hands, these are compliments. Bataille faced the problem of distinguishing "imperative" from "impure" heterogeneity, of which he approves, and which homogeneous society has always excluded and continues to need to suppress. But this is a tenuous distinction; and when it is placed alongside Bataille's defense of Stalinism in *The Accursed Share*, it becomes suspicious, if not dangerous.

Leiris's methodological objections and the problem of fascism raise a question of which Bataille himself was aware:

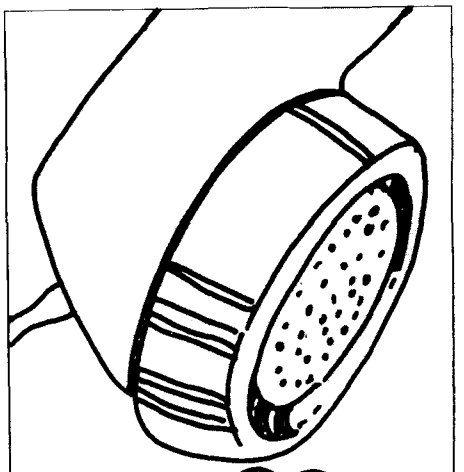
> Why should I not admit . . . that it is possible that I am creating a phenomenology and not a science of society? . . . Would what I am setting forth here be anything more than a combat ideology? That is to say, by definition, a necessary delusion.

I share Bataille's doubts. And in these doubts I also find some of the answers to the riddle of Bataille's popularity, of the relentless recent publication of his works in English.

For a start, there is the fact that Bataille is religious *and* an atheist. Though religiosity is without doubt in the ascendant in American life, belief in a personal god has rather a bad intellectual reputation. Bataille's godlessness, therefore, may provide for educated people a very sophisticated version of the kind of activity in which television preachers engage on Sunday nights

But the main reason for Bataille's new audience is surely his wholesale rejection of modernity, his unqualified contempt for bourgeois life and values. These days modernity is everywhere under attack, by conservatives as well as by radicals. The irony, of course, is that most of its critics are themselves modernists. They all accept the modernist myth that our era represents a radical break with the past, that it constitutes a period that can be understood and manipulated as a single independent whole, that it is essentially characterized by some single feature that holds both the key to its nature and to its control. That feature is most often identified as "means-ends" rationality—as precisely the economic rationality that Bataille denounced. Conservative critics see such rationality as a betrayal of the classical ideal of a reason that provides its own values and underwrites only virtuous means for achieving them, and urge a return to its benign dominance. Radical critics see economic rationality as the ultimate degenerate development of classical reason and advocate a complete overthrow of its insidious domination.

Thus Bataille is interesting to both camps, though each reads him for its own reasons. His nostalgic craving for a return to an archaic form of society based on a correct understanding of the sacred is appealing to conservatives, while his attack on reason and his praise of violence and madness provide them with a perfect instance of where they think modernity went wrong. That same attack on reason attracts radical critics of modernity to his work, as does his "unmasking" of the operations of repression through which instrumental rationality has estab-



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lished its power; and they also resonate to his millennial vision of a world in which "heterogeneous" forces will ultimately break through and perhaps institute a new society without precedent. It is a vision that combines Marxism and Christianity, and so it corresponds to a number of currently popular variations on that old theme.

Bataille is a deep, outrageous paradox. Unclassifiable as a writer and as a thinker, he speaks to private mystics, despairing conservatives, disgruntled radicals. Uncannily suggestive, he is often read more systematically than he deserves. He shares with his critics and his defenders alike the modernist (some would say "metaphysical") mania for an ending, for a solution to all our problems, as if all our problems really were one, as if a single view could encompass and totally dispose of them. But this is chimerical. Like all modernist critics of modernity, Bataille gives good reasons for disaffection, but few means, if any, for overcoming it.

A Bee in His Sonnet

BY DONALD DAVIE

Collected Poems 1937-1971 by John Berryman edited and introduced by Charles Thornbury

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 347 pp., $25)

It would be nice, and just about possible, to write about John Berryman without mentioning Robert Lowell. Lowell's shadow fell heavily on Berryman while they were both alive, though there's reason to think this was more of a problem for Berryman's readers than for Berryman himself. But now that they are both dead and thereby "historical," driving a wedge between them would serve little purpose. They were the two male voices (their female peers are another matter) of the American imperium.

At a certain stage of his career Lowell discerned, or thought he discerned, that such an imperium, an American Empire, had come into being; and thereafter he wrote poems leaning on the assumption that there was a "rhyme in history" between the Roman Empire, which held together for centuries, and an American Empire that held together for perhaps only 30 years. This was a myth, although not in the sense that it was a transparent fiction (for it wasn't); it was an assumption enforced by a compelling rhetoric—Lowell's rhetoric pre-eminently, but also President Kennedy's and President Johnson's. Berryman didn't naturally think along these lines, but he was cast by this mythological (but not false) logic as a laureate of North American imperialism, too. He didn't mean to be, and yet he was, a poet of Empire.

In 1966 Berryman—the author of *Homage to Mistress Bradstreet* published ten years before, the recipient of awards from the National Institute of Arts and Letters, of the Pulitzer Prize (for *77 Dream Songs*, which appeared in 1965), and of a Guggenheim fellowship—departed with his third wife and his daughter for nine months in Europe, initially and most permanently in Ireland. It was from Dublin that he sent his publisher the 110 "Sonnets to Chris" that, supplemented by seven new sonnets and a prefatory poem in the "Dream Songs" stanza, came to be known as *Berryman's Sonnets*.

He needed money, or thought he did. His drinking habit, which the Irish domicile did nothing to allay, no doubt weighed heavily on the domestic budget. Still, Berryman at his most drunken was a poet in earnest, not a cynical sponger. So the question inescapably arises: What did he think he was doing, dredging up from 20 years before poems that, for all their audacity and inventiveness, were irretrievably compromised by being in thrall to a rhyming and metrical straitjacket long discredited?

Berryman was no fool, no naïf. He was particularly knowledgeable about those Shakespearean decades that saw the sonnet-sequence acclimatized in England. Can he have thought, as "a Renaissance specialist," that what worked in 16th-century England must work in 20th-century North America? Not exactly; for his diction and syntax incorporated, quite radically, 19th-century usages, notably those of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Still, his implicit claim is quite clearly that the Petrarchan sonnet could, given a few Hopkinsian adjustments, accommodate 20th-century American actuality as certainly as 15th-century Italian or 16th-century English.

Plainly, it isn't so. The social, and particularly the amorous, conventions that frame Petrarch's addresses to Laura are to this day largely baffling to Old World scholars, Italian or English or whatever. Yet the thrice-married Berryman seems to have thought that he could strike through their hesitations. Splendid, of course, for a poet to bypass such scholarly equivocations. One has seen it happen, and applauded. But Berryman's appropriation of Petrarch is hardly a case in point. For we are faced with Berryman's apparent determination—probably in 1947, certainly 20 years later on the publication of his *Sonnets*—that Petrarch's sonnets should be made to fit an adulterous liaison (doubly adulterous, it appears) in the United States of the 1940s.

The fit is just not there. And Berryman's willing the fit reveals him to be not what the overt record suggests—a New World poet exceptionally aware and respectful of Old World precedents—but a thoroughgoing New World imperialist, determined that no Old World precedent, not even one so outlandish as the Petrarchan, should resist being assimilated into the social and amorous setting of 20th-century North America.

But this is harsh. The *Sonnets*, both the writing of them and their belated publication, should be seen more indulgently. Charles Thornbury makes the right suggestion: it was in the *Sonnets* that Berryman broke free of the Audenesque and the Yeatsian "period style" that he had mastered for his first collections. In the *Sonnets* he fashioned instead the style that became distinctively his. Thornbury's word for this mature Berryman style is agreeably capacious; he calls it "nervous." Another name for it might be "deliberately indecorous." One sees easily enough how the labor at the Petrarchan rhyme scheme had the effect it did. Rhyme-words are so much harder to come by in English than in Italian; to get them at all, the writer must be ready to swoop and veer from one register of English to another. The decorum that would prescribe a consistent level of diction has to be flouted repeatedly, continuously.

Berryman's distinctive style, the style of the *Dream Songs* that are excluded from this volume, brilliantly makes a virtue of this necessity, vertiginously swooping and swerving from high to low, from pedantic to racy to raucously comical, in a way that we came to recognize as peculiarly his, and peculiarly poignant as well as entertaining. If Berryman recognized that the labor on the *Sonnets* in 1947

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brought him this breakthrough, then it is beside the point that they are, one by one and as a whole, "failures." They served their purpose for him, technically. Publishing them in 1966 was not an aberration or a miscalculation, but a justifiably proud setting straight of the record. Their overt subject is of no account; they represent a sustained and risky stylistic experiment, one that bore fruit.

We need to recognize what stage Berryman was at. In 1966 he was 52. He had reached what Lowell called the terrible moment when a poet becomes too large for critics to challenge and criticize. (That moment comes earlier in American than in European careers.) Pondering what Lowell meant by this judgment, Michael Schmidt elaborates usefully in *Reading Modern Poetry*:

> At that point his poet friends have embarked upon their different journeys, too, and are either jealous and competitive, or have no time to take him to task for his mistakes, excesses, aberrations. He is met with adulation or hostility: "The odds is gone." For Lowell, this was the point at which the poet becomes most vulnerable. He must fall back upon himself, and he is even more alone and exposed than he was when he set out. He must weigh his own work, and nothing is more difficult . . .

Berryman was weighing his own work when he published his *Sonnets*.

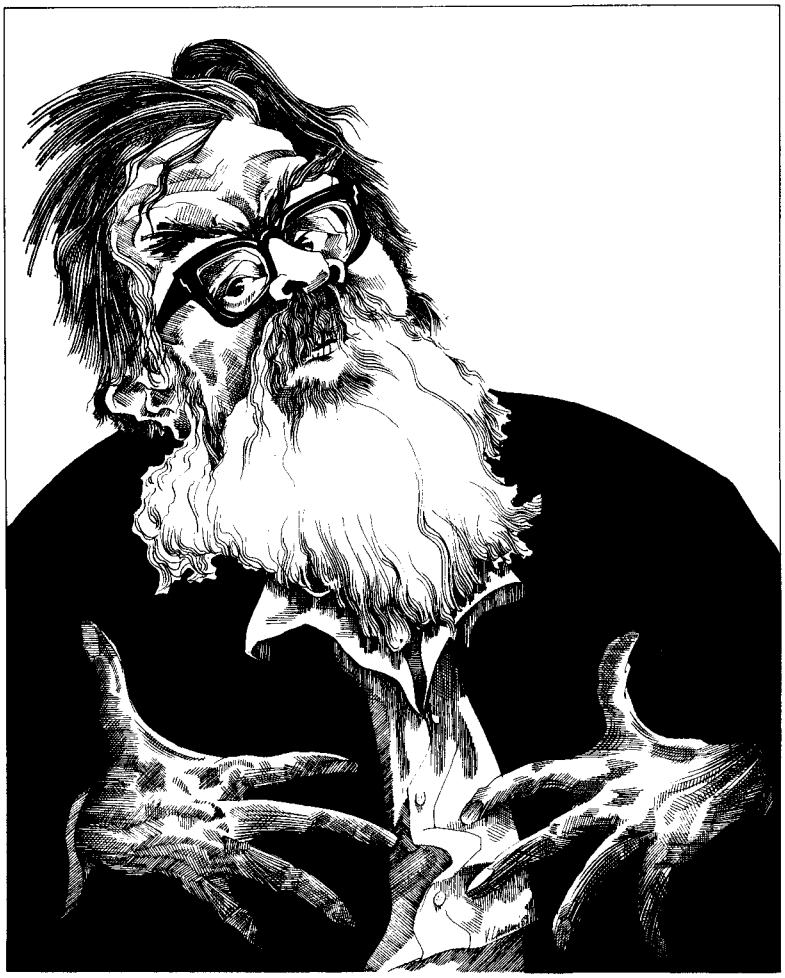
The threat that adulation poses to the poet (especially to a poet like Berryman, who always anxiously solicited the advice of his peers) helps put *Love & Fame* (1971) in perspective. Never mind the love; so long as Berryman knows what he is doing, it is the fame that worries him:

> My tough Songs well in Tokyo & Paris
> fall under scrutiny. My publishers
> very friendly in New York & London
> forward me elephant cheques.

The sprained word order of these sentences is another of the indecorums that he had learned to tolerate in the *Sonnets* and to exploit in the *Dream Songs*. But the larger indecorum is, of course, in the choice of subject. A not very prissy reader could well be shocked by the explicitness of some of Berryman's treatments of "love," but he violated a more jealously guarded taboo when he undertook to puzzle over what it was like for him to be famous. "Fame is the spur," thought the Renaissance. Berryman, weeping all the way to the bank (he knows he cuts a comic figure), cannot persuade himself that fame in that glorious sense is the same as the celebrity he has, with fat royalties, and carte blanche to make amorous conquests.

I recall with some discomfort that when *Love & Fame* first appeared, I thought, like others, that it was self-indulgent. We had been bamboozled not by Lowell himself, but by some of his admirers, who had proclaimed, on the basis of his *Life Studies*, the emergence of a new kind of modern poetry called "confessional." Confessional was what *Love & Fame* seemed to be; and I confess that even today I am disconcerted by not seeing where the distance is between the alcoholic drying out in a mental ward and the man who writes poems about it. Berryman tells us:

> Amplitude,—voltage,—the one friend
> calls for the one,
> the other for the other, in my work;
> inverse and prose. Well, hell.
> I am not writing an autobiography-in-verse, my friends.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

To this day I have sympathy for the reader who responds, raucously, "You could have fooled me!"

Still to come was *Delusions etc. of John Berryman* (1972), which the author did not live to see through the press. I'm not aware that anyone has annotated these rather obscure poems sufficiently to make any of us confident in judging them. (Thornbury's annotations are austerely textual.) Though it is wonderfully various, a lot of it is more dependent on Gerard Manley Hopkins than anything since the *Sonnets*. Its first section—"Opus Dei," an exercise on the offices for the day (Matins, Nones, and so on)—plainly takes off from the last section (Part Four) of *Love & Fame*, subtitled "Eleven Addresses to the Lord."

There has been no lack of voices deploring these late poems as a belated lurch into religiosity, but there is in fact much evidence from earlier in Berryman's career that even at his most bawdy and arrogant he was always, and consciously, a son of the Church. Accordingly, the poems of *Delusions etc.* deserve much more respectful and instructed attention than they have yet received. To my ear, they come off the page with a rhythmical authority that commands such attention. Cheating a little, I quote his "Lines to Mr. Frost" from this last collection (since we began with Berryman the American imperialist):

> Felled in my tracks by your tremendous horse
> slain in its tracks by the angel of good God,
> I wonder toward your marvellous tall art
> warning away maybe in that same morning
> you squandered afternoon of your great age
> on my good gravid wife & me, with tales
> gay of your cunning & colossal fame
> & awful character, and—Christ—I see
> I know & can do nothing, and don't mind—
> you're talking about American power and how
> somehow we've got to be got to give it up—

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so help me, in my poverty-stricken way
I said the same goddamn thing yesterday
to my thirty kids, so I was almost ready
to hear you from the grave with these passionate grave
last words, and frankly Sir you fill me with joy.

There speaks a poet who recognizes civic responsibilities; not, as too many commentators would persuade us, a man entranced by his own image in the mirror.

DONALD DAVIE is emeritus professor of humanities at Vanderbilt University. His most recent book of poems is *To Scorch or Freeze: Poems About the Sacred* (University of Chicago Press).

Their Masters' Voice

BY JAMES M. MCPHERSON

Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery by Robert William Fogel

(W. W. Norton, 539 pp., $22.50)

The publication of Robert Fogel's new book on slavery inevitably calls to mind the furor aroused by his volume on the same subject 15 years ago. *Time on the Cross*, co-authored with Stanley Engerman, became a celebrated media event and generated a contentious scholarly debate. In breathless prose, Fogel and Engerman announced what they described as revolutionary findings based on massive amounts of new data subjected to elaborate computer analysis.

Some of the most sensational findings, according to the authors, centered on the economics and demography of bondage in the United States. Slave agriculture was much more efficient than free-labor agriculture; the Southern economy grew more per capita than the Northern economy in the late antebellum period. Slaves enjoyed a higher standard of living, a better diet, and a greater life expectancy than free urban workers in the North and than their own children and grandchildren in the first generation of freedom. Slaves received in the form of food, shelter, and health care 90 percent of the income produced by their labor—far more than free workers.

Slaves also enjoyed opportunities for upward mobility within the system—for example, from field hand to driver or artisan. Few slaves were whipped: rewards and inducements were more effective than coercion in the planters' management of slave labor. Only a tiny percentage of slave marriages were broken by sales or other actions by the master; slaves enjoyed a stable family life only minimally harmed by the sexual exploitation of their owners. Abolitionists who condemned slavery as compulsory, and therefore as unproductive labor, were, Fogel and Engerman argued, really exposing their "racist myopia": they "belittled the quality of black labor" by failing to perceive that the average slave "was harder working and more efficient than his white counterpart."

After an initial wave of favorable reviews in newspapers and general-circulation periodicals, accompanied by a blitz of interviews in the mass media, Fogel and Engerman came under increasingly heavy criticism from fellow scholars in both history and "cliometrics" (a term coined by quantitative economic historians to describe their discipline). They were accused of reviving the antebellum Southern apologia for slavery, despite their vigorous protestations to the contrary. Numerous conferences, symposia, and reviews in professional journals, as well as a book of essays published in 1976, *Reckoning with Slavery*, challenged many of the principal findings of *Time on the Cross*. In response, Fogel and his students undertook further research, refined their statistical techniques, and promised a new study. *Without Consent or Contract* is the result.

Gone is the breathless, polemical style. Gone are the theatrical claims of new and startling revelations. *Time on the Cross* contained no footnotes; readers interested in tracking down the sources for its assertions faced a bewildering search in the accompanying volume of *Evidence and Methods*. The new book is also buttressed by accompanying volumes—no fewer than three of them—containing research reports, data, and technical papers. But this time the main volume includes footnotes to guide the reader through the maze of data.

In a sort of mea culpa, Fogel confesses that his earlier "discovery that slaves were effective workers who had developed a much stronger family life, a more distinct culture than previously recognized" may have functioned to "diminish the moral horror of slavery and constitute (no matter how innocent the intention) an apologia for centuries of exploitation." Fogel also makes numerous concessions (often without seeming to do so) to critics of his earlier book. Slave sales now appear to have "destroyed 10 to 20 percent of their marriages." And it turns out that rather than a mere ten percent rate of expropriation of their product, slaves suffered a considerably higher (but unspecified) degree of exploitation than free workers.

Fogel continues to insist on the superior efficiency of slave labor to free agricultural labor whenever the slaves lived on plantations large enough (16 or more slaves) to be worked in gangs. But he no longer attributes the efficiency of the labor primarily to positive incentives, or to an internalized work ethic among slaves; it was, rather, a consequence of "the enormous, almost unconstrained degree of force available to masters." Because women and young children as well as male slaves could be driven to field labor, two-thirds of all slaves were members of the labor force, compared with one-third of the free population in both North and South. In *Time on the Cross*, the slave plantations' efficiency was implicitly equated with virtue. Fogel now concedes that "efficiency is not a synonym of good. . . . [It was] the ugliest aspect of their system."

As for diet and health, Fogel modifies slightly the positive picture presented in *Time on the Cross*. The slave diet was higher in calories than the free American diet, but not in proportion to the heavier physical labor required of slaves. Vitamin and protein deficiencies, especially in childhood, contributed to a higher child mortality rate and a lower life expectancy among slaves than free Americans. The average height of adult male slaves (another measure of nutrition) was one inch shorter than that of white American males in 1860 but slightly taller than that of European males. Slave heights and life expectancy were also greater than those of immigrants and of the working classes that crowded into the largest American cities.

In *Time on the Cross*, this seemed to mean that slaves lived better than free urban laborers. That, of course, was the slaveholders' defense of their institution

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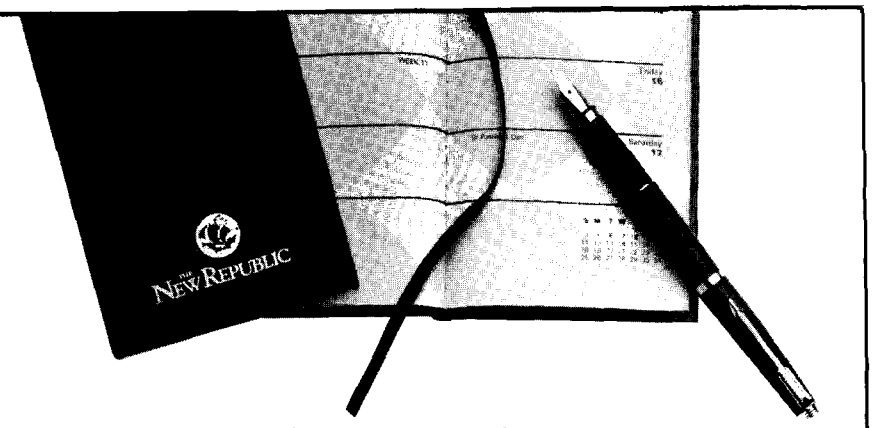
against abolitionist attacks. But Fogel now concedes that human beings do not live by bread alone. Perhaps, after all, the abolitionists were on to something when they insisted that freedom meant opportunity and choice rather than denial and repression. At the very least it meant that one's spouse or children could not be sold to a stranger. As the focus of the second half of Fogel's new book, the abolitionists emerge as almost the heroes of the story, in sharp contrast to their role as racist villains in *Time on the Cross*. "If the foes of slavery had waited for economic forces to do their work for them," writes Fogel in 1989, "America might still be a slave society, and democracy, as we know it, might have been a subject only for history books." The abolitionists portrayal of slavery's economic backwardness, Fogel now recognizes, was part of a propaganda campaign to discredit the institution. The abolitionists were not criticizing *black* laborers, but rather *slave* labor, because it robbed the laborer of incentive, of dignity—of freedom.

Of course, as the anti-slavery movement broadened and went into politics in the 1840s and 1850s, its initial moral fervor became diluted with the addition of large numbers of Northerners motivated by pragmatic considerations, including racism. And even the most simon-pure abolitionists probably harbored some feelings of cultural superiority to slaves, which we might today brand as racism. Still, "to censure the abolitionists for not fully anticipating our values," Fogel now believes, "would be foolish. A policy congenial to us could not have built the political coalition needed to destroy slavery." In its origins "the struggle against slavery arose as a religious movement . . . against sin"—the sin of enslaving one's fellow man, who was likewise created in God's image. The original abolitionists launched "an uncompromising struggle for equal civil rights for free blacks in the North."

These words indicate a major change over the past 15 years in the cultural climate with respect to that slippery concept "racism." For a time in the late 1960s and 1970s, it was fashionable to label nearly all whites as racist by definition. Famous Americans were the worst of the lot, especially if they had enjoyed a reputation for racial liberalism. Lincoln was a "honky" and the abolitionists were closet white supremacists. For racism admitted of no degrees. The paternalistic white liberal was as bad as the Southern redneck—or worse, because he compounded racism with hypocrisy.

Time on the Cross was a product of that cultural climate. It portrayed the aboli-



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tionists as greater racists than the slaveowners, because the latter at least believed in the value of black labor and could point to the output and wealth of their plantations to prove it. But today it is the planters who stand convicted of "profound injustice," writes Fogel, while the abolitionists, with all their shortcomings, recognized that a system that "permitted one group of people to exercise unrestrained personal domination over another group" was "profoundly evil" and "horribly retrogressive in its social, political, and ideological aspects."

The second half of *Without Consent or Contract* does an excellent job of relating the anti-slavery movement to broader economic and social trends in the North, especially large-scale immigration and the nativist response in the 1840s and 1850s. Fogel's analysis of this complicated matter skillfully incorporates the latest scholarship on the intermittent alliance of nativists with anti-slavery politicians in a dual crusade against Catholicism and the slave power, which were themselves allied in the Democratic Party supported by immigrant voters.

But having earlier made a reputation as an iconoclast (in addition to *Time on the Cross*, Fogel wrote a book challenging the idea that railroads fostered economic growth in 19th-century America), he could not resist the temptation to come up with a startling new thesis in this book, too. Echoing the nativist charge that heavy immigration lowered the wages of American workers and intensified poverty in Northern cities, Fogel maintains that during a seven-year period from 1848 to 1855 the real wages of native-born craftsmen "probably" declined by 25 to 50 percent:

> Native-born mechanics and tradesmen suffered one of the most severe economic disasters in American history. . . . The "hidden" depression of the antebellum era . . . [rivaled] the economic blow suffered by urban labor during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Moreover, this was a chronic problem that persisted during much of the 1830-60 generation. Here is a sensational argument in the classic Fogel style: this depression was so well hidden that other historians have failed to notice it. Indeed, most of them portray this era as a prosperous one with a rising standard of living for most workers, despite important pockets of poverty and economic dislocations.

The more sensational aspects of Fogel's earlier work on railroads and slavery have been widely discredited. It remains to be seen whether the hidden depression thesis will meet the same fate, but there are signs that it isn't likely to fare well only three dozen pages later in this very book. In discussing one of the evils of slavery (the one most emphasized by Lincoln), Fogel points out that bondage denied slaves the opportunity for upward mobility enjoyed by free workers. "The decisive advantage of free labor systems was . . . the opportunity for laboring classes to improve their lot as a consequence of rapid technological progress," he writes. "Over their lifetimes persons from the lower classes tended to rise in the occupational hierarchy and to improve their standing in the distribution of wealth. . . . Sons from lower-class families were generally better off than their fathers." Upward mobility was the Great American Dream, and never was the dream stronger than on the eve of the Civil War. What has happened to the hidden depression?

Slavery, in any case, violated this dream. Therefore, writes Fogel in a moving epilogue, "slavery deserved to die despite its profitability and efficiency because it served an immoral end." This conclusion seems almost banal. Yet if some of Fogel's revisionism of himself leads him to less than startling assessments—a chastened iconoclast ends up sounding conventional—he also offers serious scholarship about matters that have been central to the American experience. *Without Consent or Contract* sets Afro-American slavery in the context of Euro-American history since the discovery of the New World. And Fogel's treatment of the rise of the anti-slavery movement, from its roots in the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment to its climax in the triumph of free-labor capitalism during the 19th century, is thorough and well-balanced. Robert Fogel's personal odyssey through the pain produced by the "crackling atmosphere" of criticism that greeted *Time on the Cross* to the condemnation of slavery in *Without Consent or Contract* gives a tone of moral urgency to this book that is quite appropriate to its subject.

JAMES M. MCPHERSON is the author of *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (Oxford University Press).

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 6*

Getting Our Bearings

To the editors:

I was amazed at the muddled thinking in Fred Barnes's "Patriots and Traders" (September 4). First, he ridicules Commerce Secretary Robert Mosbacher's argument that unchecked, unfair foreign competition may lead to a monopoly market by unfair traders and then to a markup in prices. Preventing extraction of monopoly profits isn't some harebrained idea from Mosbacher; it's the very foundation of our antitrust and antidumping laws—laws that date back to the late 1800s.

One concrete example is found in a study by the military's Joint Logistics Command:

> From 1981 to 1984, the Navy was 100 percent dependent on a Japanese source (NTN) for noise quiet super-precision bearings. In 1981, after capturing the entire noise quiet bearing market, NTN notified the Navy that, as a result of "new internal company management policies," NTN was changing its NT-3 (noise quiet) bearing programs. As a result, lead time for delivery of bearings would change from 180-210 days to 300-400 days effective immediately, and cost per bearing would be increased. . . . *The price of NT-3 bearings would continue to increase* and NTN would no longer provide price quotes or supply NT-3 bearings in small quantities. [emphasis added]

Bearings are critical to our national defense. They are used in everything from jeeps to submarine propulsion systems to aircraft engines.

U.S. Trade Representative Carla Hills also made a point that Barnes ignored. Japan *has* protected its home market, charging high prices to its own consumers and pursuing market share in the United States with a vengeance by charging low prices. If Japan is pursuing such a "foolish policy," why is it the largest creditor nation in the world with the highest per capita income, and why are we—who are "benefiting" from such foolishness—the largest debtor nation in the world? The Japanese know something that academics and Washington journalists have forgotten. Akio Morita of Sony put it succinctly: "The American economy is . . . an economy without substance. It must return to a real production economy." We'd better listen.

ERNEST F. HOLLINGS
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C.

Bitter Tea

To the editors:

TRB ("Tea and Toleration," August 21) praises the relative tolerance of the British, noting that "the mildly smutty and politically controversial TV shows that have advertisers here fleeing wouldn't cause a second glance in Britain." OK, admire the culture that permits sex and politics on the tube, but realize that blatant racial prejudices are also "tolerated" on British telly. On a recent trip to England, I watched in dis-

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belief a prime-time sitcom in which a policeman returned to the police station after demonstrating police techniques at a school and reported on his enthusiastic reception there: "They all wanted to be fingerprinted, but there wasn't enough time. So I just did the colored kiddies."

The joke—it was meant to be a joke—is despicable. But the laugh track rolled and the show went on. No lawsuits. No public outcry. Not even a second glance. This, I'm afraid, is not toleration.

ERIC RASMUSSEN
Basel, Switzerland

Flying High

To the editors:

Using Elaine Buckberg's own figure of a $300,000,000 net profit for the Perots ("Airport '89," August 21), the Internal Revenue Service may collect $84,000,000 in capital gains taxes at the present rate of 28 percent. That will produce a 147 percent gain on the taxpayer's investment. Not bad.

C. HOWARD CAPITO
Greeneville, Tennessee

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TRB *continued from page 4*

breaking the New-Deal-legacy political bond between the middle class and the poor and near-poor. It is hardly unreasonable or demagogic for the Democrats to note in response that the interests of people making above $100,000 and below $100,000 don't always coincide. "Redistribution," Mr. Michel? Income distribution in this country is becoming more unequal, not less so—and the growth in inequality is greater after taxes than before. What is the point of an opposition party if it doesn't make noise about that?

Of course class war should be waged intelligently. This was not the moment to push for an increase in the top income tax rate, however fair such an increase might be. It confused the issue—which is the scandal of a new tax *break* for the wealthy—and scared away some Democratic representatives who don't want to be tarred as tax raisers. The Democrats needed the new revenue to pay for their own proposed break for IRAs, offered on the theory that you can't beat something with nothing. As Speaker Tom Foley said to *Time*, if you tell taxpayers a proposed cut for capital gains is worth $25,000 to Donald Trump and $10 to them, they'll just say, "Fine. Give me my $10." The logic is tempting, and the integrity of financing a proposed tax break with proposed new tax revenues is admirable. But Democrats will never win a tax-cut bidding war. Better to remind voters of the good things the government might do with $25,000 instead of handing it over to Donald Trump.

It's hard for the Democrats to talk honestly and persuasively about taxes. What has really gone on in recent years is a huge reduction in taxes on capital and high incomes, financed by a huge increase in a regressive tax on low and moderate incomes—the Social Security levy. The Social Security tax is flat-rate, with no exemptions or deductions, and stops at $45,000 a year. Its share of federal revenues has soared, and the Social Security surplus is paying for about a third of the government's general deficit. But no one dares raise the specter of tampering with Social Security.

Indeed the Democrats can't wage real class warfare because on issue after issue they're caught in a sort of truth gridlock. At every turn you bump up against some truth that can't be uttered, either because the Reagan-Bush Republicans have made it unsayable or because the Democrats themselves have made it unsayable. •

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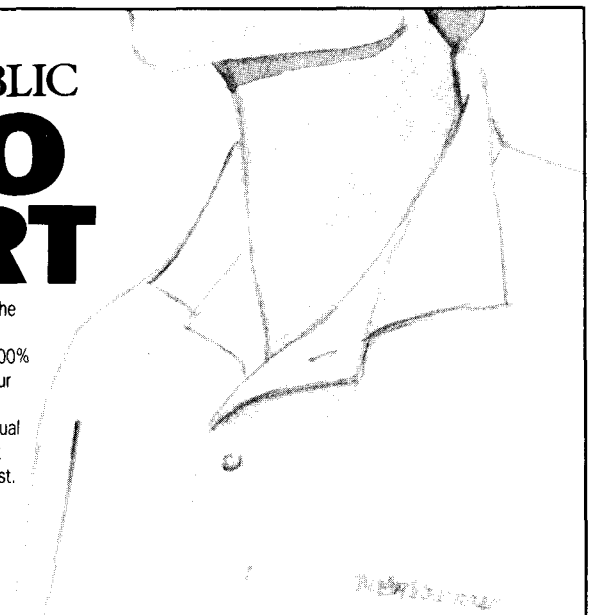

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

The Bottom Line

I AM UP TO WHERE THE WOMAN IN the pink jogging suit was about an hour ago. Easy to spot, she's inched her way to about an hour and a half from the front of the line, so I figure that in another two-and-a-half hours I will be at the window, getting my D.C. license plates. Several times, in my dreams, I have relived the ordeal, the three-and-a-half-hour wait for a pair of lousy tin plates, blue and red on white ("A Capital City"). I felt that I was in a French post office or a Polish breadline. Yes, I brought something to read: *Twelfth Night*, since I was going to see the play in a few days. But I couldn't concentrate. The two guys in back of me were talking about crack. They were working out a conspiracy theory that involved rich people and government officials allowing the crack trade to continue because they were all profiting from it. I mulled this over for a few moments, but then it became part of the nightmare of waiting. I imagined the woman in pink was actually Olivia disguised as Caesario disguised as a woman from the suburbs who had stumbled into this Municipal Building purgatorio. Next, I calculated the annual economic loss: 600 people in line, each waiting three-and-a-half hours for something that should take no more than half an hour. That's 1,800 hours times an average pay of, say, ten dollars an hour times five days a week times 50 months a year, which comes to $4.5 million. Can't the bonehead mayor of Washington understand that one of the very few places where citizens meet their local government is in the Department of Motor Vehicles? He could take a lesson from the folks ten blocks away, on Capitol Hill, where I work. There, the taxpayers' money is put to good use in the meeting and greeting and accommodating of taxpayers. Go visit your representative's office and you'll get a glass of orange juice and a smile.

LAST SUMMER, THINKING OF MOVing to another state so I could avoid standing in the license-plate line, I was perusing the Help Wanteds and ran across an ad for a director of marketing that read: "Ben & Jerry's Homemade, Inc., the slightly left of center-ice cream company located in the heart of Vermont's Green Mountains, needs a seasoned professional to lead and direct our marketing department. This senior level position requires 7-10 years in the marketing field (M.B.A. preferred) with a strong background in special events, media development. . . ." It went on to list other high-level qualifications, and concluded: "Most companies would pay $150,000 per year for this job; we'll pay mid-70's (ask and we'll tell you why) and all the ice cream you can eat. Perpetual inquisitiveness expected. Humble visionary preferred." Now, I know that the Diarist is not supposed to do any actual reporting, but I couldn't resist. I had clipped the ad last July, and I wanted to know how it turned out. In this era of Ronald Reagan's third term, could a company actually hire a hotshot MBA at half-price plus the promise of psychic income from touchy-feelyism? I called Waterbury, Vermont, where, in early October, the leaves had already turned and windshields were already frosted in the morning, and talked to Elizabeth Lonergan, the human resources manager of Ben & Jerry's. She was as sweet as you would figure; it was almost like calling Santa Barbara. "Get any responses?" I asked. "Nineteen hundred," she replied. Good, talented people: ad executives, marketing executives, people who were making a lot more money. She was about to make her final choice. As for the "ask and we'll tell you why," the answer is that Ben & Jerry's follows a "five-to-one" rule. The highest-paid employee, founder and CEO Ben Cohen, is paid no more than five times what the lowest-paid employee gets. Ben makes $81,000. Imagine if this rule obtained at, say, Chrysler: assembly-line riveters would make two million bucks a year. So why did 1,900 people respond to the Ben & Jerry's ad? "Our reputation for being offbeat," said Liz Lonergan. Benefits? All employees get the same thing—no special health plans for execs, no country club memberships, no extra vacations. "If I hired you right now," she said, "you'd earn two days of vacation for the three months you'll work between now and the end of the year. And you take those two vacation days in 1990." Two days! Then, for working 12 months in 1990, I would get ten days in 1991—the annual limit for the first three years. This is enough to make any rational economist sick. "Doesn't money attract people?" I asked Lonergan. "Yes," she said. "Money is important when you're making $7 or $8 dollars an hour and living in a trailer with two kids to feed, but once you get to $30,000 or $40,000 a year, it's pretty much gravy." And then there's the all-the-ice-cream-you-can-eat part. Ben & Jerry's gives each of its 320 employees, from assembly-line packers to directors of marketing, three pints of ice cream a day. Ninety-three gallons of Cherry Garcia and New York Superfudge Chunk a year. Oh, now it all makes sense.

ON CAPITOL HILL VERY FEW folks with voting cards believe that everything over $40,000 a year is gravy. Members of Congress still want a raise, and my guess is that they will give themselves one. All it takes is nerve. And didn't Congress show nerve in defeating that Helms amendment to regulate the content of government-funded art? The secret to this somewhat mystifying act of sophistication (contrast it with the nonsense over flag-burning) is that members of Congress don't want to be thought of as philistines, and they'll even risk the wrath of voters to avoid the scorn of their tony friends. After all, the most popular extracurricular activity on the Hill is the Congressional Arts Caucus, where you get to go to receptions featuring Woody Allen expounding on the evil of colorization.

BACK IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS, before the bottom fell out of the precious metals market, there was a silver guru who kept subscribers renewing his newsletter at outrageous prices with a simple gimmick. At some point, he promised, he would issue what he called My One Time Only Super Absolute Sell Signal (MOTOSASS). As far as I know, he never did issue the signal, and, of course, silver and gold have long since plunged. I have my own signal (GLASSOSASS), and I am getting ready to issue it soon, newsletter or not. It's a signal to sell stocks, and the main reason is the destruction of the Tax Reform Act of 1986 by George Bush with the collusion of the Democratic Party. Last week I talked with a rich person for whom everything over $30 million is gravy. He said that he would profit short-term from the cut because he has lots of capital gains, but he's still against it. "I'll have to waste a huge amount of intellectual energy," he said, "finding ways to turn ordinary income into capital gains"—in other words, searching for uneconomic tax shelters. "And the reaction to this thing is going to be horrible." He's right. The inevitable result of cutting the tax on capital gains will be raising the rates on ordinary income, and we're back where we started. The idea behind tax reform was to cut out the loopholes (including the capital gains tax), neutralize the effect of the Tax Code (stop it from being so coercive, directing financial activity one way or another), and cut rates. These sound ideals are now going down the toilet, along with any chance of balancing the budget. For George Bush, Richard Darman, Ed Jenkins, Richard Gephardt, and everyone else responsible for gutting the finest piece of legislation in the past 20 years, I am holding a place in the license-plate line, several hours behind a woman in a pink jogging suit.

JAMES K. GLASSMAN

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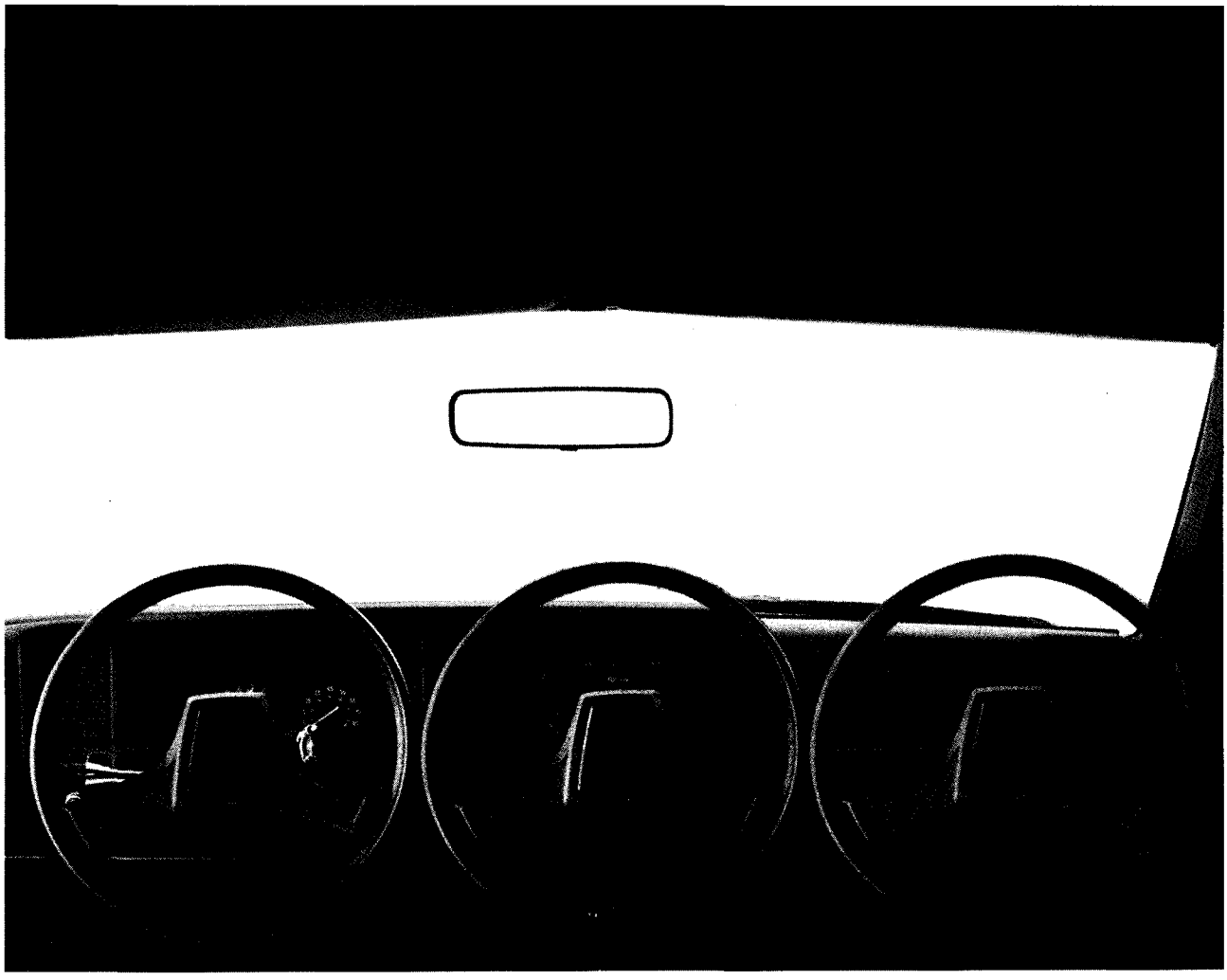

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